

# PANAMA PICTURES



MICHAEL DELEVANTE

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Midway view of the Great Culebra Cut.

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# PANAMA PICTURES

NATURE AND LIFE

in the

Land of the Great Canal

BY

MICHAEL DELEVANTE  
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THIS BOOK IS  
LOVINGLY DEDICATED  
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MY WIFE, ALETHIA,  
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## INTRODUCTION.

For the truth of everything that has been written in this volume, the author vouches.

ACROSS THE PANAMA ISTHMUS is an up-to-date Sketch of the Isthmus, of Isthmian life and manners, of the Canal, and the present improved conditions, so much in contrast with those depicted in the Story of AN UNHEEDED WARNING. Should ACROSS THE PANAMA ISTHMUS succeed in the mission on which I send it out, I shall then have been most amply rewarded in the vindication of the Isthmus of Panama.

A TALE OF THE OLD WASHINGTON HOUSE should not fail to entertain all those who are interested in Isthmian life of the Past; in the sayings and doings of men in the early period written of; and in the history of one of the oldest Panama Rail Road land-marks that graced the Atlantic Terminus. Possibly, there are still a few of the *Old Boys* living yet, whose names, in

disguise, are associated with the incidents portrayed, and whom the Story will reach, eventually, in its wanderings about the World. Should such be the happy circumstance, it is to be hoped that it will take their memories back to the good times and the happy days they spent in the dear *Old Washington House*, of which I, too, have some very pleasant recollections.

AN UNHEEDED WARNING is a Story dealing with the mad influx of people from abroad, almost immediately after the signing of the Canal Treaty between the Republic of Panama and the United States Government, and the unfortunate results which the early rush led up to. The story is a true one, with, of course, the usual little embellishments, here and there, which go towards the adornment of a Tale.

Michael Delevante.

Colon, Republic of Panama, January 1,  
1907.

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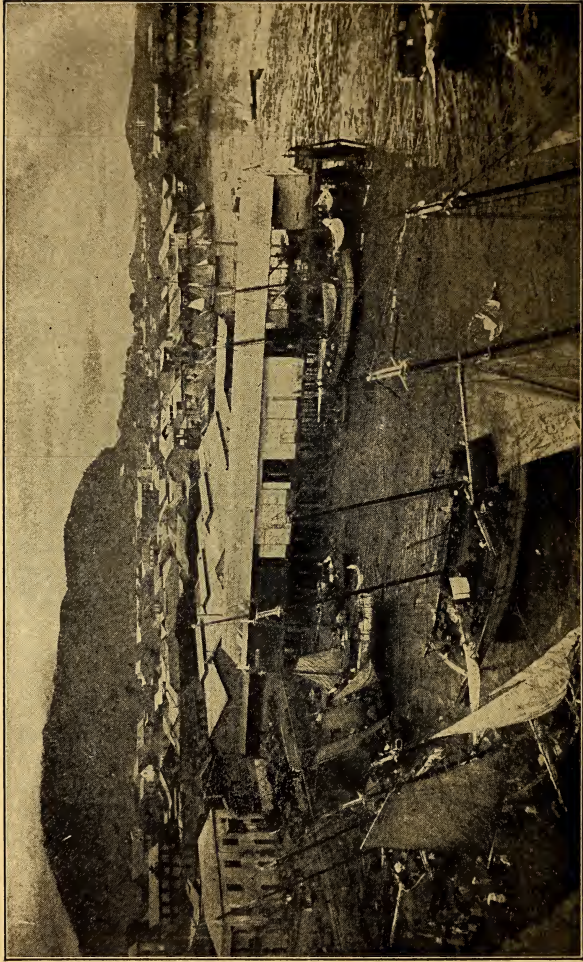
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ACROSS THE PANAMA ISTHMUS



Panama Bay.

## Across the Panama-Isthmus.

On one fine morning, in the *Veranito* month of October, 1906, the watchman, whose beat was around the *Washington House* and the neighboring cottages on the Beach, came to my room-door, in accordance with instructions given to him the night before, and, rapping upon it impatiently, sang out to me, in that half-dreamy tone of voice which smacks of a stolen wink or two:

“It’s half past four, *Señor!*”

As further evidence that the fellow had really been sleeping at his post of duty, I heard him yawn, deep-mouthed and long, as I answered back to him:

“All right, *Sereno*—I’ve heard you—*muchisimas gracias!*”

But to make it doubly sure, it seems, that both of us were awake, he rapped again and repeated more coherently:

“It’s half past four, *Señor!*”

This time there was a deeper ring of impatience in his voice, and, pervading it, a tone of evident fear that his reputation as



a watchman was at serious stake, and—yes, perhaps, he thought, his job too.

In order, however, to relieve his anxiety, and to convince him that I was up and about the room, busying myself over the morning's journey, I was compelled to go out to him, just as I was—in my "brief garments"—and thank him once again for having succeeded in calling me on time!

Then I returned to my room, and started to get myself ready for the train which leaves Colon at 5.30 A. M., and by which I had arranged to take a run across the Panama-Isthmus.

After I had got dressed, I hurriedly partook of a cup of coffee, which had been drawn for me from the night before; and then, I went out to the hush and quiet of the streets, wending my way to the railroad station, which was not far off.

It was a wonder-lovely morning! There was a strong, fresh breeze blowing from the south, which convulsed the stately coconut trees that strewed their golden blossoms on the pavements.

Belike the Watchman, the Sun was just then half awakened from his slumbers; but I could see, glimmering in the distance, the wondrously-woven heralds of his coming; for the fair *Santa Rita Hills*, across the Bay, were draped with clouds of amethyst and gold, that cast their dream-hued shadows upon the waters, and kissed the silver orient into dawning.

It was exactly 5.30 A. M. when I reached the railroad station. There were still a few clouds of the night before lingering in, and overshadowing, the east; but the electric lights, which were still burning brightly, succeeded in robbing the Morning of her pending darkness.

As I landed on the platform, I was just in time to hear the last ring upon the gong against the wall, and the conductor sing out:

“All aboard!” in a voice that might have been heard around the entire neighborhood. Then the engine bell swung to and fro and sounded the usual warning; after which the whistle tooted shrilly; and just as the train

began to move slowly out of the station, the brass-buttoned gentleman jumped upon the baggage-car with a graceful swing of his accustomed legs.

These preparatory manœuvres, which the dauntless engineer had just gone through, reminded me, at once, of the facetious and gesticulative manner in which, in years gone by, a friend of mine was wont to comment upon them after he had seen the daily trains move out from the station.

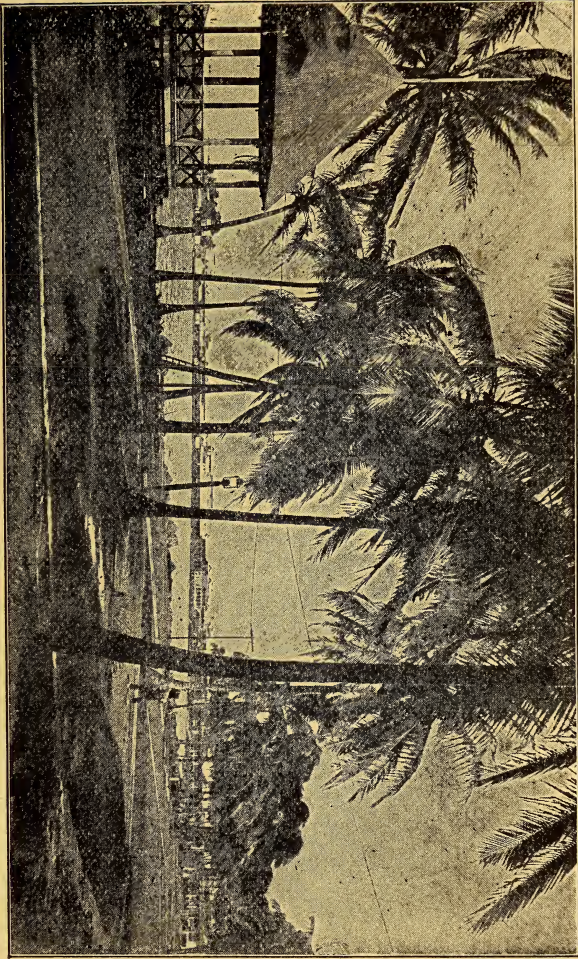
On each occasion he would come to me, and, with the positive delight of a child illumining his always-ruddy countenance, would say, in his usual laconic and disconnected style, as he shook the first finger of his right hand at me:

“Engineer’s—job—soft—job—see?—

“Toot—Toot!” and, then, he would turn an imaginary lever around, as he sang out, to the finish:

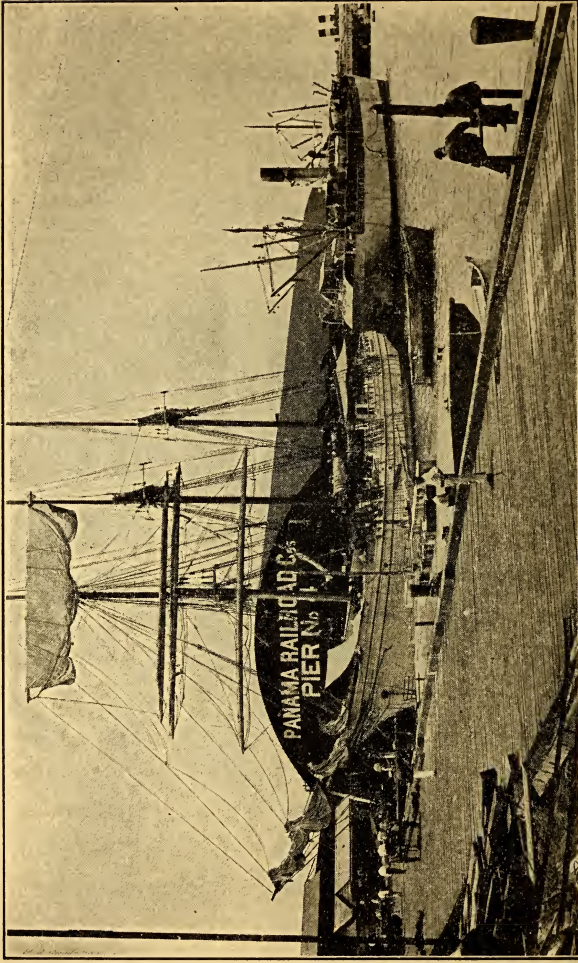
“PANAMA!”

This was the peculiar and original way which my friend had, always, of classifying



"Palm Avenue," Cristobal, on the Atlantic seaboard.





Pier 4—in the Harbor of Colon.

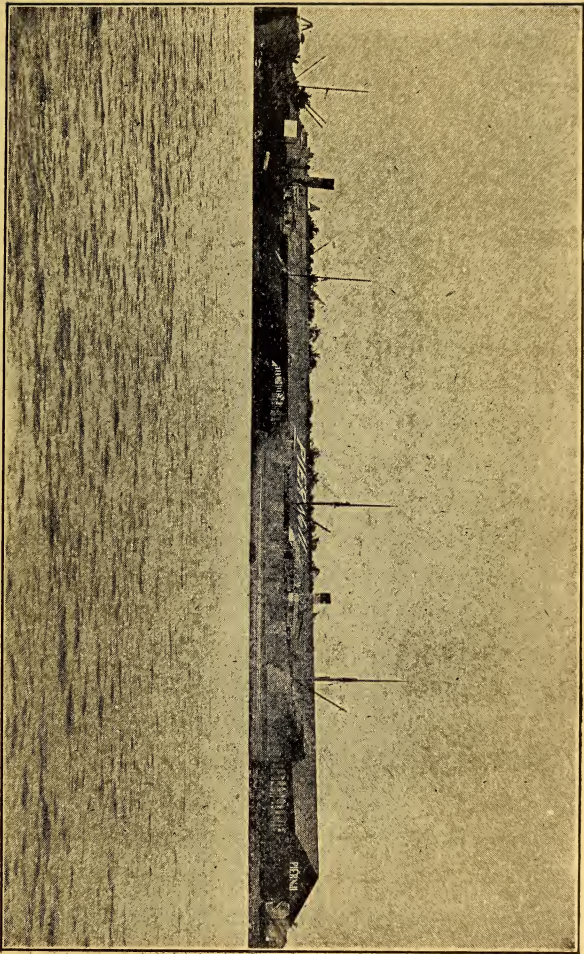


an engineer's job on the Isthmus—at a time, too, when bullets were buzzing like bees along the line of the railroad, and when an engineer, full many and many a time, as most of us know, was compelled to bring his *Iron Horse* to a sudden halt, or get the contents of two Mauser-rifles emptied, forthwith, into his anatomy!

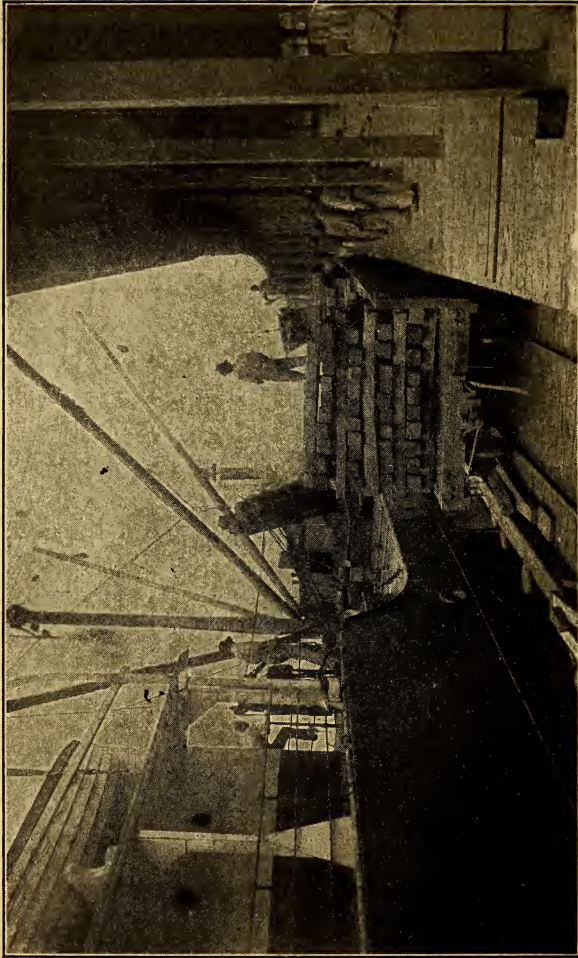
But then, perhaps, my friend did not appreciate, to the fullest extent, the danger that an engineer incurred running over the road in those trying and troublous days, when, oftentimes, he had, in order to maintain the service, to run the gauntlet through the thick firing line!

No, sir!—when it came to a just comparison of jobs, my friend's, in the balance, was, certainly, the lighter of the two, since his was only to sit down all day long, in a comfortable chair in the office of the G. S. and hammer away at his *Remington* until he got tired, when he'd bluff, for minutes and minutes, upon the right-hand shift-key of his typewriter to make believe that he was working hard.

But, perhaps, the man behind the *Remington* thought that he, too, was a hero in his own way, even if he did face a harmless typewriter and a shorthand book only.



Pier 11 in the harbor of Cristobal.



Interior view of Pier 11 in the harbor of Cristobal.



## PART II.

When Ruskin said that travelling by rail was like being sent from place to place like so many packages, it is evident that, before making the comparison, he had not "dipped into the future, far as human eyes could see;" nor, to paraphrase Tennyson, did he see then, the vision of Panama, or the glories that, sooner or later, were destined to be hers, by reason of her unique geographical position among the Nations of the World, and that would, eventually, make a railroad ride over a beautiful tropical stretch of forty-seven miles of country, a thing never to be forgotten!

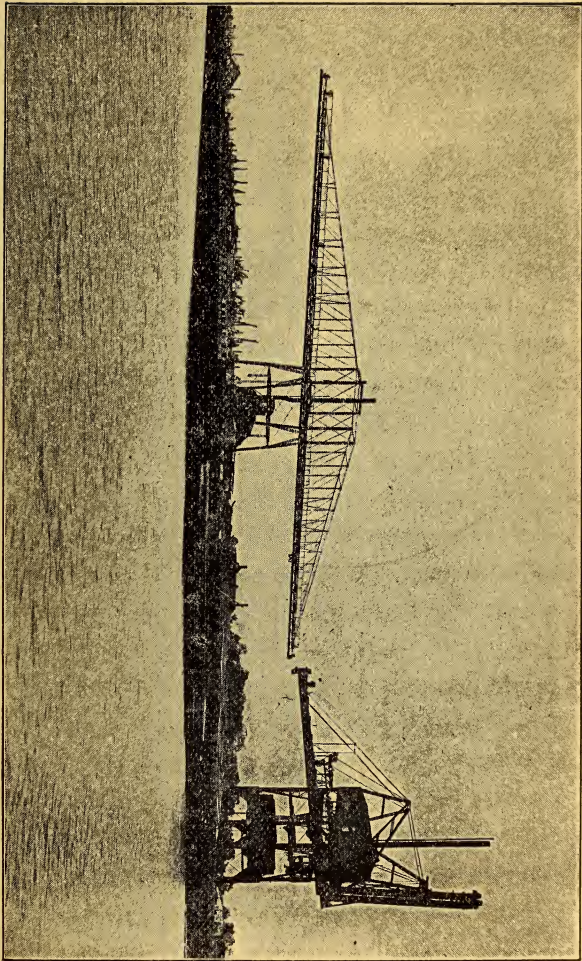
Be this as it may, however, a trip across the Isthmus of Panama has always been a most delightful and interesting experience for me; but on the present occasion, with which this article deals, I must say that I was more deeply impressed than ever before, on account of the marked improvements

which I had noticed all along the line of the railroad, and which, summed up to a grand total, amounted, so to speak, to a veritable resurrection of things, long dead, from the graveyard of 1888, when the French retired, to the living present period of 1906!

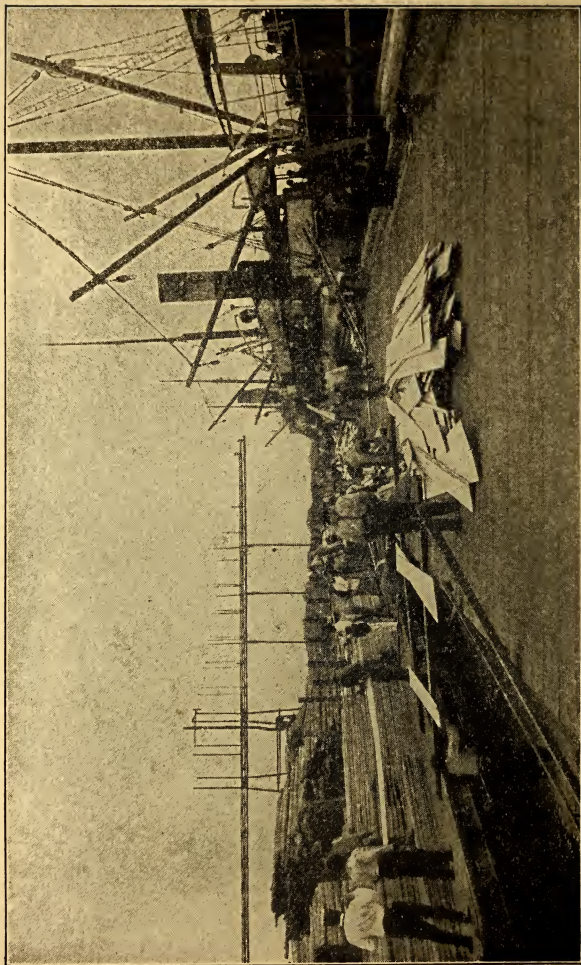
The rejuvenation which the various stations had undergone since the advent of the Americans, was patent everywhere—in short, the transformation was simply wonderful; for it seemed scarcely credible that so much good work could have been accomplished in such a comparatively short space of time, in a tropical country, too, where things, as a rule, enjoy the unenviable reputation abroad of moving slowly on, and—*mañana-like* to a close.

But, forgetting our critics for the time, and remembering this, only: "The Truth does not hurt—it thrills," let me, for the benefit of those who are *real lovers* of the Truth, and who are friends of Panama, proceed with this truthful sketch of the Isthmus, and of the railroad ride I had across it a few mornings ago.



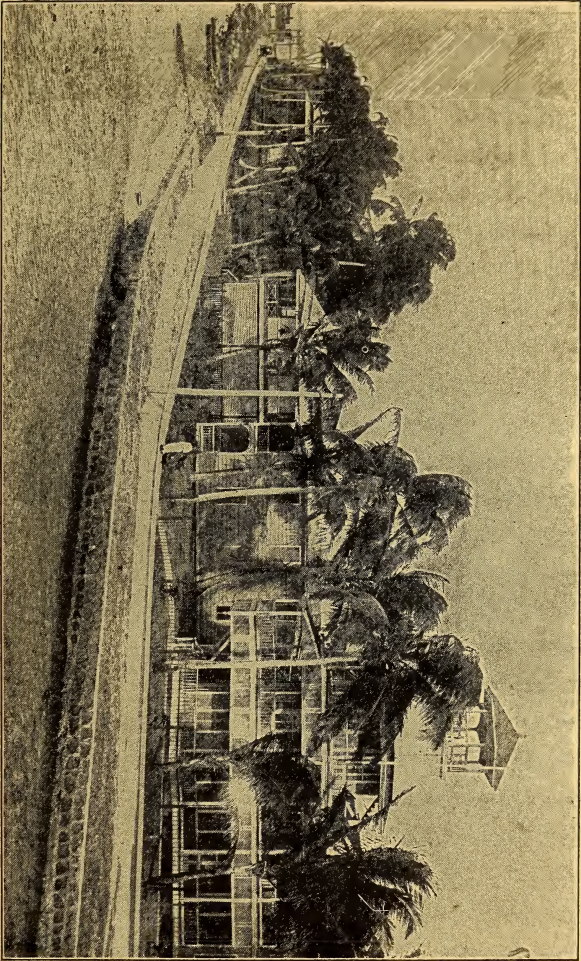


Pier 14 in the harbor of Cristobal.



Interior view of Pier 14 in the harbor of Cristobal.





The Beach, Colon: "Enveloped in a veritable labyrinth of Coconut-trees."



The two famous DeLesseps' Palaces at Cristobal.

Comfortably seated in one of the new, palatial passenger-cars, which had lately been put into service, I watched the beautiful fields stretch out in all their pensive quietness—the peaceful flow of the lakes and rivers, as our train dashed madly by—puffing—panting—snorting—eager, it seemed, for the end of its journey.

The scene was simply enchanting: the whole view of the surrounding country lay before me like a beautiful panorama; for the Jungle-wood, all around and about it, was wild-flower dotted, while the air was cool and balmy, and redolent of those strange, soft odors, which are natural to the tropics! On the trees of the green, dense forests, the rains, which had fallen the night before, had left their heavenly benedictions in large, white crystal drops, which scintillated beneath the rays of the early morning sun, until it seemed as though you were being hurried through fields upon fields of myriad and myriad of diamonds!

And yet, despite of all these beauties surrounding us; despite of all that has been ac-



complished, and that still is doing on the great world-work of uniting two oceans, we are "coolly" told by our "friends" abroad, that we live beyond the pale of civilization—that we are making no progress on the Canal whatever—spending money, only, and "sawing wood," as the paradoxical saying goes.

But this, no doubt, is the light in which we are seen by those who have had their proverbial axes to grind, but whose repeated approaches have been repulsed by the honest Grindstones, that have refused to revolve around their independent axles—irresponsive to the touch of wooing blades, whose disappointments have ever been vented through the frenzied passions of venal pens!

And yet, if the sun paints true, as it must always, for God is Truth, perhaps the photographs which accompany this little sketch of mine, when compared with the pictures of the Past, will serve as ample testimony to the glorious achievements of the present day.



## PART IV.

The Isthmus of Panama, which lies east and west on the map, is crossed by a long chain of low-lying mountains, whose extreme altitudes do not exceed a thousand feet at any point along the line of the railroad.

Colon, the Atlantic terminus, once known as Aspinwall, and so named by the first American comers in memory of the father of the Panama Railroad, is a small, flourishing town, about one mile long, and situated on the Island of Manzanillo.

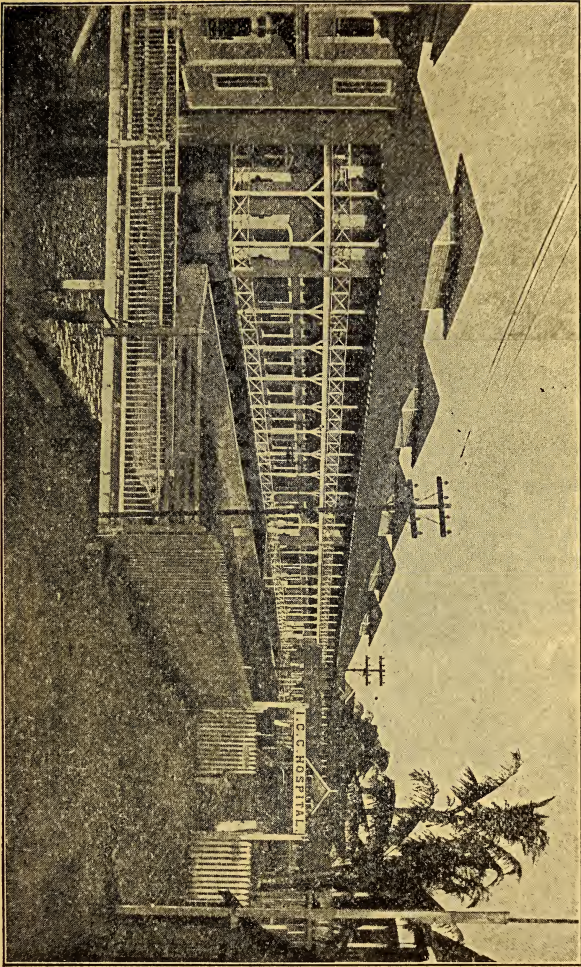
To passengers on the in-coming steamers, the harbor presents a most picturesque appearance, especially so from that part of it generally known as the "Beach," which is crescent-shaped and enveloped in a veritable labyrinth of cocoanut-trees, between whose multiceptered branches nestles the group of buildings occupied, principally, by the offi-

cials and employes of the "Parent Company." Notably among these, is the General Manager's residence, with its lofty cupola overlooking the broad and beautiful Caribbean.

To the eastern end of the town are situated the magnificent hospitals, which were built by the Commission for the care of their sick employes. From the same source, also, the indigent patients of Colon, enjoy the benefits of free medicines and the best of medical attention.

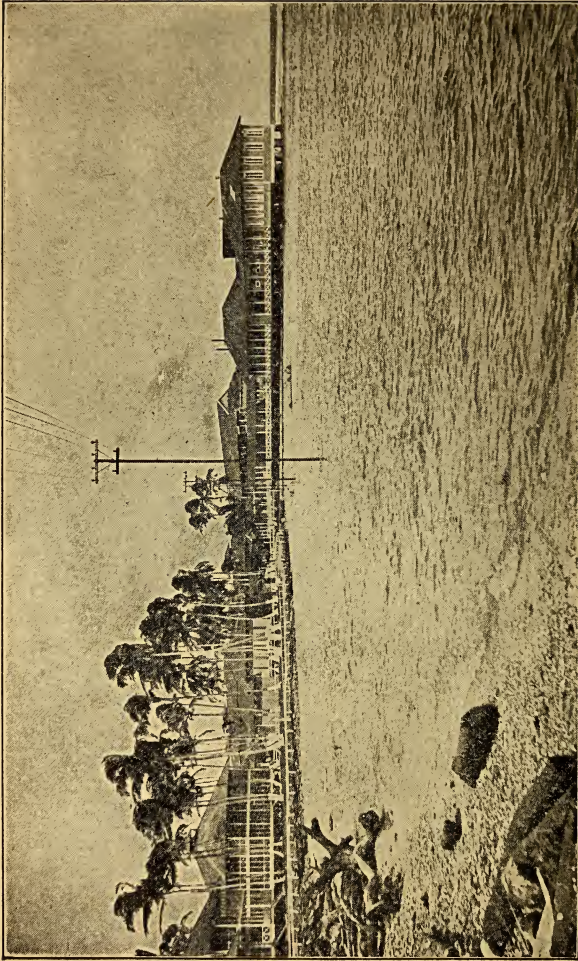
The equipment and personnel of these hospitals, leave nothing to be desired, being fit to rank with any of those of the larger cities in the United States. In the equipment, one finds the most improved and modern appliances in the personnel, the highest standard of talent and ability in doctors and nurses.

But this is not, by any means, the one and only boon which the Americans have conferred upon Colon since their advent on the Isthmus. They have given us paved Streets, an ample Water Supply, with hydrants at



The I. C. C. Hospitals, Colon; view from the shore.





The I. C. C. Hospitals, Colon; view from the sea.

almost every corner, a Cold Storage Plant, which is replenished weekly with meats, fruit, and vegetables from the best markets in the United States; a Steam Laundry and Bakery; an efficient Fire Brigade, capable of coping with any conflagration; Free Public Schools in the Zone; a "Wireless Telegraph" Station; a complete system of Drainage; and, last, though not least, improved Sanitary arrangements—a blessing hitherto unknown in the history of the Isthmus.

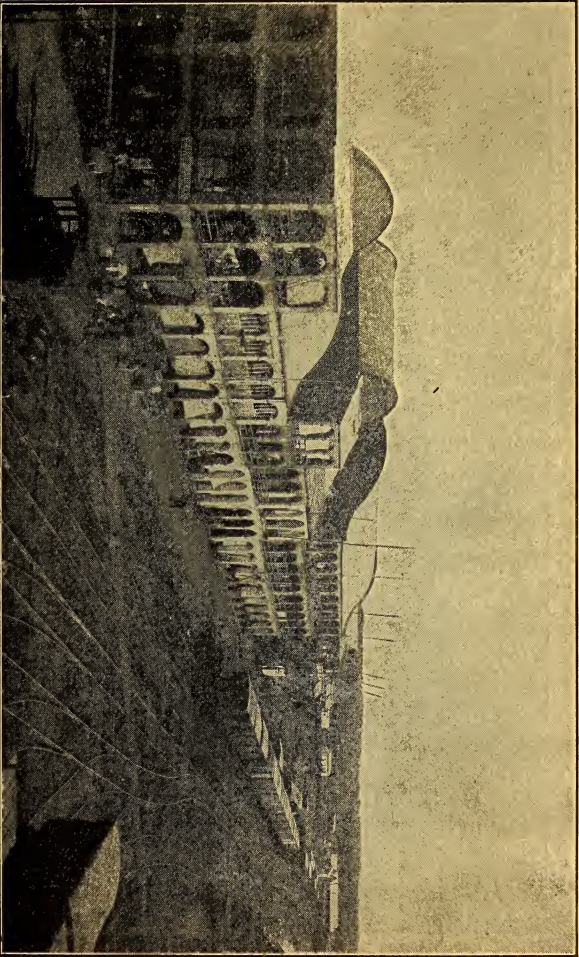
When all these things are reviewed in the minds of impartial critics, *acquainted* with the conditions of the town, as I remember them in the years gone by, they should, certainly, leave the impression that our evolution, from a series of mud-flats and salt marshes, has been most wonderful. At home, we see ourselves rising, rapidly, "on stepping stones from our dead selves to higher things," and fast approaching a stage when Colon, metaphorically speaking, will find herself dressed out in the full regalia of a modern city.

The present population of Colon is variously estimated; but I would not think of putting it down for anything less than ten thousand souls, which figure, of course, will keep on increasing as work progresses on the Canal.

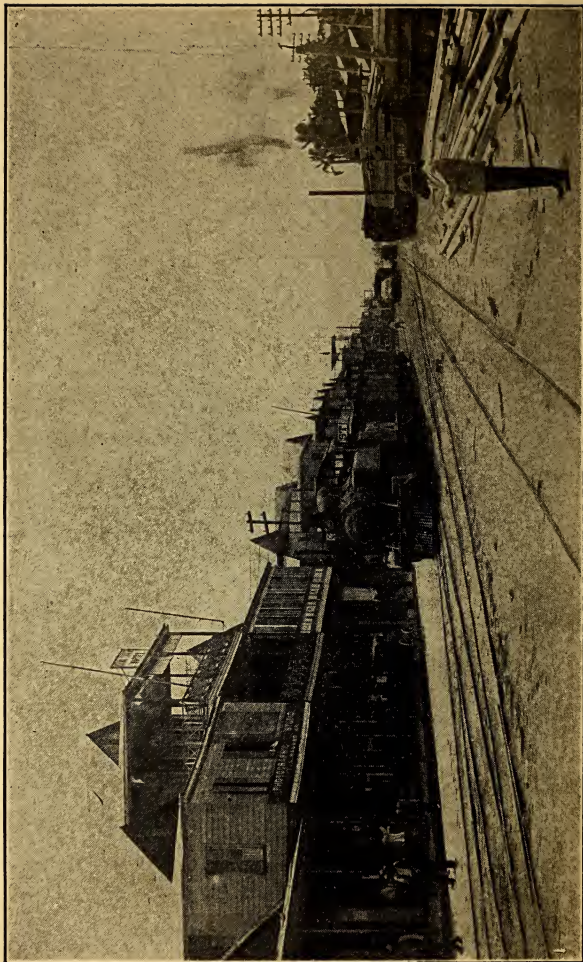
Our seasons of the year are two: "The Dry" and "The Rainy" seasons; the one begins in the month of December, and the other in the early part of April. Yet some "kind friend," who tried to be facetious, once said that our two seasons were: "The Wet and the Rainy Seasons!" Colon, of course, is always at her best during the "Dry Season;" for the sun is brightest then, and the northeast trade-winds are blowing a half o' gale! And it is at this period of the year, too, that the sea puts on her robe of deepest sapphire, and the white spumescant surf comes rolling in upon the shore with a mad, glad thunder, whose music is all of its own!

Colon is divided into three distinct sections: first, there is the commercial part of the town, of which Front Street is the chief





Front Street, Colon, in 1885.



Front Street, Colon, in 1907.

thoroughfare; second, there is the "Beach," which has already been described, and, third, there is Cristobal, where the offices of the Isthmian Canal Commission and the residences of its employes are pleasantly situated. This settlement, which was once a "Swampy Eden," minus a Mark Tapley and a young Chuzzlewit, is now a beautiful little spot, laid out with picturesque wooden cottages, which are shaded by long rows of cocoanut trees. The principal thoroughfare in this direction, is "Palm Avenue," at the end of which are the two famous "De Lesseps' Palaces," which are now being used as offices: one by the Engineering and Constructing Department, and the other by Mr. W. G. Tubby, the indefatigable Chief of the Division of Material and Supplies, through whose hands must pass the multiplicity of articles—from a pick to a steam-shovel—necessary for the construction of the great Isthmian Water-way!

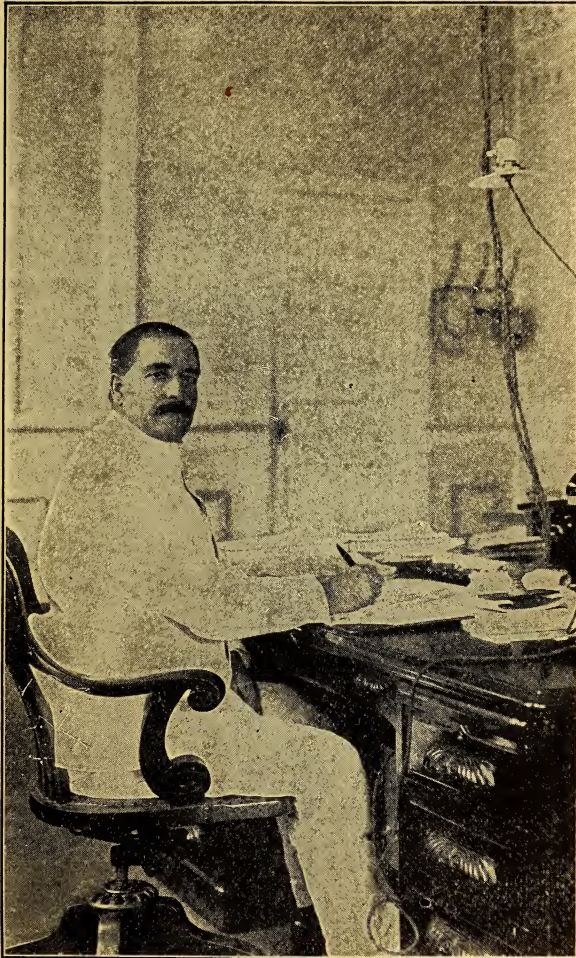
Immediately opposite to these two palaces, which have lately undergone extensive repairs and alterations, stands the imposing

bronze statue of Christopher Columbus like a sentinel guarding the Atlantic entrance of the Canal.

Cristobal boasts of its own independent harbor, which, from being situated at the entrance of the Canal, and consequently in the Zone, is essentially American. It has two large docks—Nos. 11 and 14—which are now in operation, and which have afforded considerable relief to the docks in the Port of Colon, proper, which latter have been unable to cope with the increased demands of the shipping lately. The docks are provided with a Cantilever-Crane for the handling of ordinary cargoes, and a Brown-Hoist Coal Plant for the discharge of colliers.

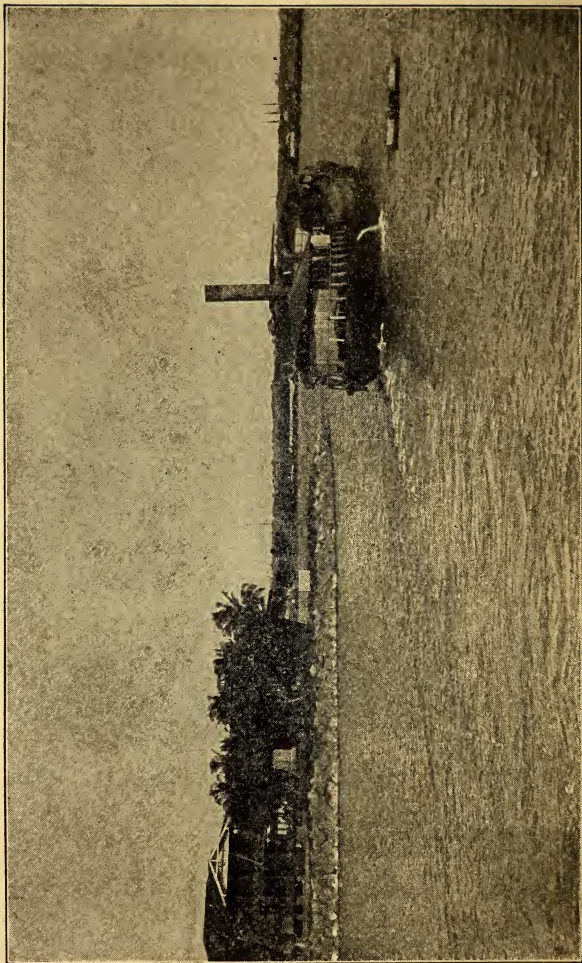
For the past year or so, Cristobal has been making rapid strides in the way of expansion towards the district known as "Fox River," which she is so steadily absorbing that she now shows signs of finally converging into Mount Hope, a village some two miles distant from Colon, and where an ex-





Mr. W. G. Tubby, Chief of the Division of Material and Supplies.



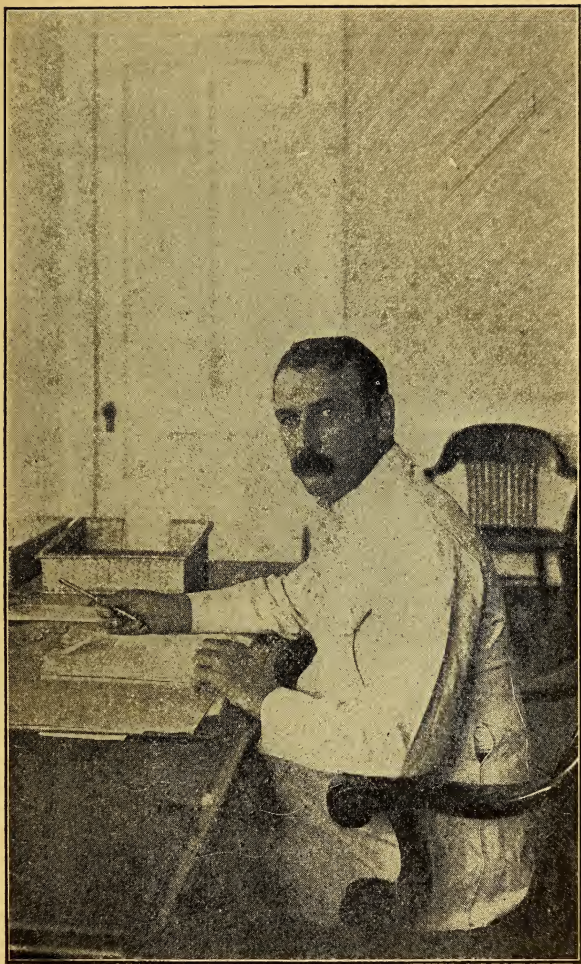


Entrance to Cristobal Harbor.

tensive Rail Road Yard has lately been constructed.

This happy condition of things has been the result of the constant and increasing demand for land-space required for extra Canal and Rail Road facilities, made necessary in consequence of the vast progress in the work of the one, and the notable extensions and betterments, which the other is daily undergoing. And just here I must not forget to mention the new Train Yard which has been built at Fox River, the magnitude of which can be rapidly conceived when my readers are told that it takes in some twelve miles of steel track, and not less than eighty five switches! Then, there are the new and commodious Machine Shops, Round Houses, Turn-Tables, Coal-Chute, all of which are now in satisfactory operation. In addition to these improvements, there is the old French Dry-Dock, at present in the course of reconstruction, and which, when completed, will be capable of accommodating steamers of about three thousand tons register—all of which has been the work of a

new and strenuous regime, and the outcome of the true Americanism which has been displayed by Mr. Jno. F. Stevens, Chief Engineer of the Isthmian Canal Commission, and Mr. W. G. Bierd, General Manager of the Panama Rail Road Company—the two leading spirits, on the Isthmus, of Canal and Rail Road operations.



Mr. Jno. F. Stevens, Chief Engineer of the I. C. C.





Mr. W. G. Bierd, General Manager of the Panama Rail  
Road Company.

## PART V.

Between Cristobal and Panama, there are, altogether, some twenty-five stations, the most important ones among them being: Mount Hope, Gatun, Bohio, Frijoles, Gorgona, Matachin, Bas Obispo, Empire, and Culebra, all of which are mentioned in the order of distances from Colon.

## MOUNT HOPE.

Mount Hope is where the Canal Commission has an immense Warehouse, measuring 488 feet long by 149 feet wide, which is a model of its kind, for the neat and tidy arrangement of the thousand and one different articles which are stored within its walls. It has a Fire Brigade of its own, which is composed of the Clerical Staff, whose alertness is oftentimes unexpectedly surprised by the sound of a false alarm of fire, when every man rushes to his post im-

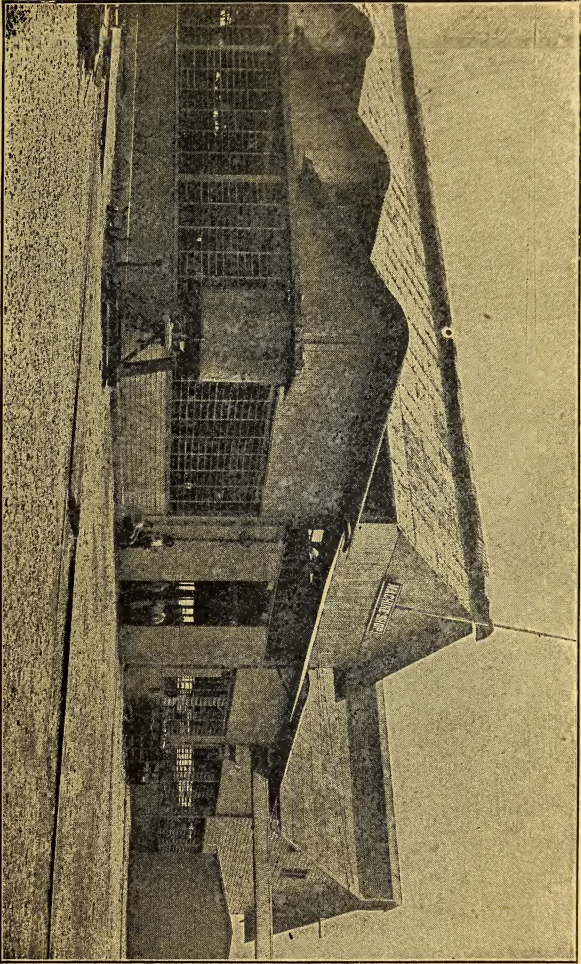
mediately; some with hose and others with axes, in order to show how ready would be the response in the event of a real emergency. When President Roosevelt paid a visit of inspection to this warehouse, he passed his approval of it in the following manner:

“Well, I see, you’ve got a nice, big place here,” he said, smiling broadly, as he walked away and boarded his palace car, “La France!”

A short distance from this warehouse, is situated the Cemetery for the burial of the dead of Colon and of the neighboring districts. Then, a little way beyond the Passenger Depot, over the Hills, there is the Reservoir which supplies the Atlantic Terminus with water, and which, lately, has been the target for severe and unmerited criticism from abroad.

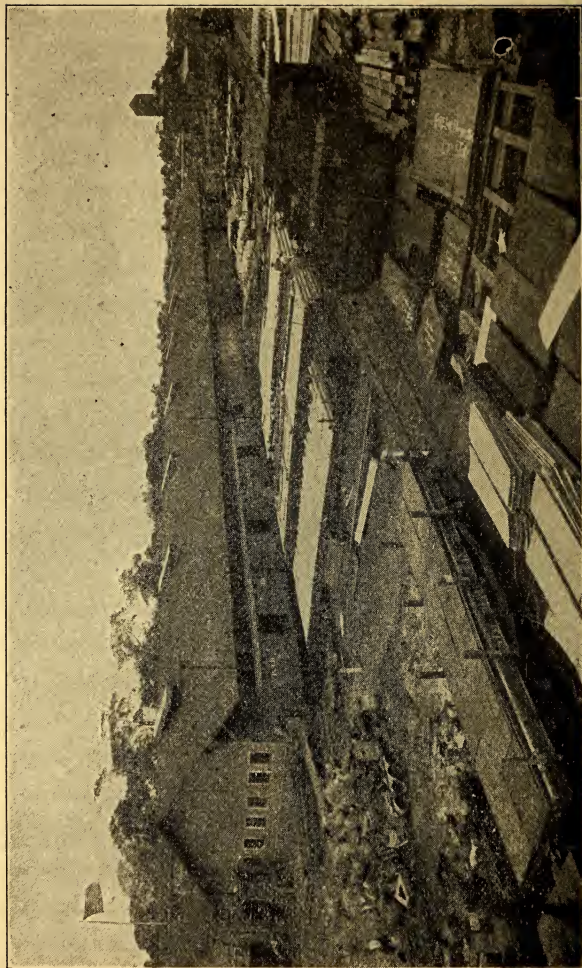
The population of Mount Hope, formerly called *Monkey Hill*, is a mixed one, but it is principally composed of Jamaica negroes, with a small sprinkling of the Chinese element. In this little settlement of triple-





The new machine-shops at Cristobal.





Exterior view of the I. C. C. Warehouse at Mount Hope.

unique importance, some slight effort has been made, it seems, in the way of agriculture; for yams, plantains, cocoas, lemons, oranges and bananas are cultivated by the dwellers there and sent in to the nearest market for sale at exorbitant prices! Besides these, there is the luscious guava, which grows wild, and abundantly, in the quiet little Cemetery on the brow of the Hill, where the countless dead, of ages past, sleep their last, long sleep 'midst the songs of strange wild birds, and the lullabies of beautiful tropical palm-trees

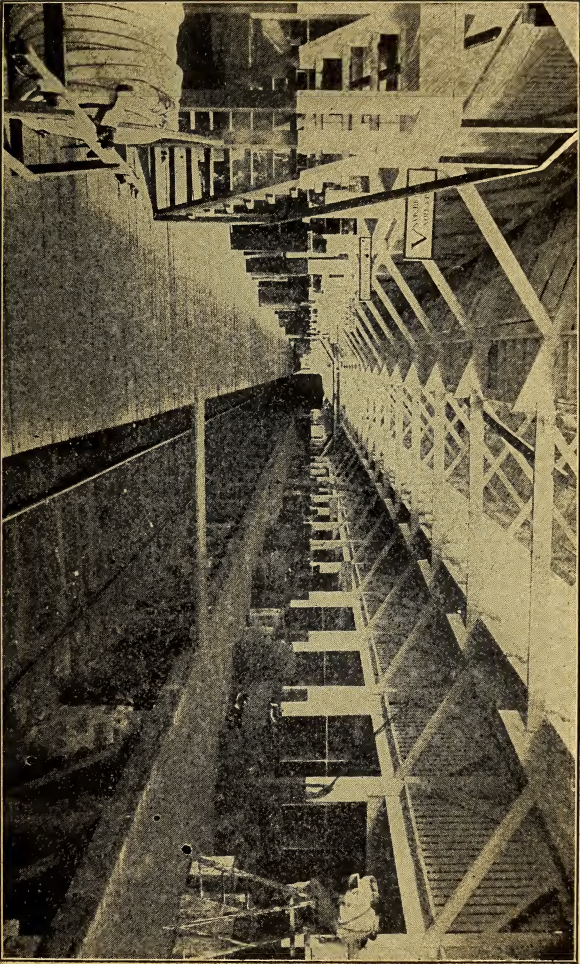
#### GATUN.

Gatun is situated on the famous Chagres River, which is one of the difficult problems in the building of the Canal. This river, which has its mad fits and passions, at times to the extent of inundating the Rail Road tracks and interrupting the traffic across the Isthmus occasionally, is something like one hundred miles long, one hundred and fifty feet wide, with a depth, in some places, of twenty feet of water. It be-

gins at Cerro de Pacora, or Tapia, Mountains, courses through Gatun, San Pablo, and Matachin, a distance of some thirty miles from Colon, and ends at historic San Lorenzo, on the Atlantic seaboard. The traffic on this river, which is very considerable, is conducted, chiefly, by means of *Cayucos*, or native dugouts, that carry the various products from the different settlements along the route, to Colon, either for local consumption or for shipment abroad.

Perhaps it is not generally known that Gatun, which is now the scene of great Canal activity, was the first Station of Rail Road operations. This was in November, 1851, when a thousand immigrants were transported there on their way to California and Oregon. It is one of those stations that are still tenacious of their native color and individuality; but the Americans are rapidly rubbing these off the slate of Time with the preparatory work they are doing in connection with the building of the Dam which is to control the mighty waters of the Chagres River, on the other side of which,





Interior view of the I. C. C. Warehouse at Mount Hope.





The Native Village of Gatun.

looking from the Rail Road Station, is the old Native Settlement of Gatun, with its primitive thatched-cabins and its ancient wooden church, the shadow of whose tall, antiquated steeple with its sainted cross, reflects, like a holy benediction, on the surface of the sometimes-peaceful waters of the river. This village is soon to be demolished, because it occupies a portion of the site of the great Dam, which is now in the course of construction. The dwellers of this place are a kind and hospitable people to foreigners that go among them, and to whom, on first acquaintance, they will pledge eternal friendships in a drink of *Chicha*, a native beverage, made of corn, rice, and barley, which is intoxicating only after long fermentation. Gatun is the most important banana district on the the line of the Rail Road. The fruit is loaded into box cars and conveyed to Colon for shipment to the United States. The banana business has been such a profitable one to the local exporters that, from time to time, it has invited the competition of foreign speculators,

who were temporarily lured into the market, until they had lost sufficient money in it to induce them, finally, to leave the field to those who had given the first impetus to the trade. The banana may be said to be the chief product exported from the Isthmus.

#### BOHIO.

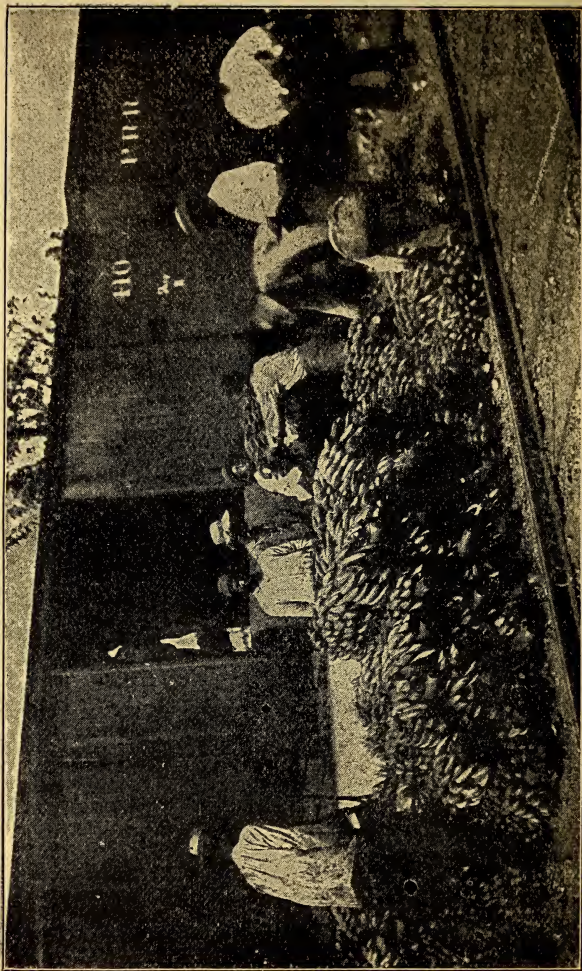
From a Canal standpoint, there is little to be said about this Station at the present writing. From a Rail Road sense, its history dates as far back as the early days of construction, when its, seemingly, exhaustless quarry furnished the necessary rock for the ballasting of the forty-seven miles of road-bed which stretches between Colon and Panama. It was from this same quarry, too, that the stones were hewn for the construction of that beautiful edifice, on the Beach, known as "Christ Church," which was most shamefully desecrated in the Pres-tan Year of 1885, when it was converted into a temporary prison for the incarceration of the offenders of that ever-memorable





The site of the Great Dam at Gatun.





Loading Bananas at Gatum.

period! Among the prisoners within the walls of this sacred building at the time, was an old Englishman, who had been a banker for years in Colon, and with whom the poorer classes of the town were accustomed to lodge their hard-earned wages, weekly, and which, on March 30th, 1885, when Colon was almost totally destroyed by fire, assumed the vast proportion of something in the neighborhood of fifty thousand dollars, which the wily Englishman placed in an open boat, ready to abscond with it in a schooner that waited for him a little distance out in the Bay. But the fellow was foiled in the act that would have impoverished so many; for he was made to disgorge the contents of his treasure-laden *Cayuco*, upon the threat of marching him to the gallows to be hung forthwith.

The present status of Bohio, as a Rail Road Station, must be measured by the extent of its importance as a Commercial centre, which I know, from experience, to be equal to that of any of the larger Stations along the line of the Rail Road.

From a personal and social point of view, however, I have, ever since I paid my first visit to Bohio, looked upon the place as my favorite picnic-ground, associated with pleasant memories of the hospitality of Don Porfirio Melendez, the present popular Governor of Colon, whose residence is situated there.

I shall never forget the first day I spent in this house by special invitation. It was on a Sunday, and the place was crowded with visitors. As I walked in, accompanied by those who had come in on the same train with me, the Governor stepped up to me, took my hand in his, and, shaking it heartily, said in a tone of voice which rang out with a welcome for all:

“*Ola! mi amigo*—You are just in time! *Marcos* is very sick—come inside, and see him before he dies!” But while he told me this with a smile upon his countenance, which I could not very well reconcile with the deep meaning of his speech, I noticed a





"Christ Church," Colon.





puzzled, solemn look upon the faces of those who had just come in with me. I, too, was disturbed; for I saw before me the end of a picnic, not yet begun, and the picture of a funeral, for which none of us had bargained at all. Despite of our embarrassment, however, Don Porfirio still smiled on, as he led the way towards the back of the house, beckoning to us to follow him.

“Come this way,” he said, “*Caballeros*, I want to show you poor Marcos”; and we all followed him, mechanically, until, to our great surprise, we found ourselves in the dining-room, where there was a large table, spread with an immaculate white cloth, upon which there stood a formidable looking Punch-bowl, with enough of the “Rosy” swirling in it as to drown the entire gathering. Our genial host stood at the head of the table, looking down triumphantly on the bowl; finally, he pointed to it, and, with the same persistent smile upon his countenance, said to the guests present:

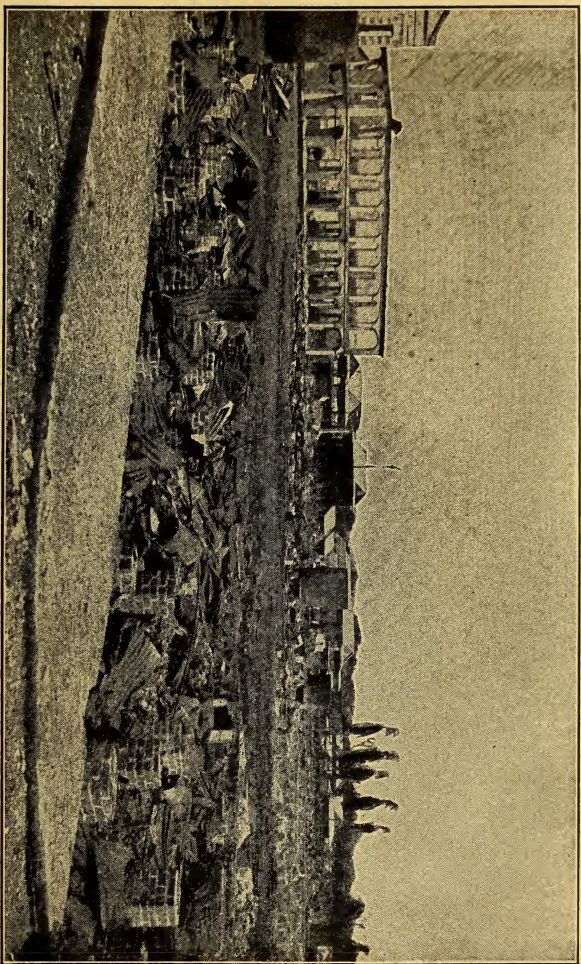
“*Caballeros!*—there is poor Marcos—he is dead; come on, now, we have to bury

him!" at which a hearty laughter arose, and went the full round of the festive table—the glasses, too, till *Marcos* was, finally, buried, and *resurrected*, perhaps, by not a few that composed the happy gathering of that day!

From that time, and until the present date, I have always remembered the meaning attached to "Marcos" whenever I have been to spend a day in the Governor's hospitable house, situated on the highest point in the district, and from which you look down on the far-stretching hills and valleys that surround the beautiful country of Bohio.

#### FRIJOLES.

At one time, this Station, save for supplying the passing locomotive with water, was, practically, ignored as a "Stopping Point" for passengers. But since the advent of the Americans, it has grown into importance, and donned the improved habiliments of the times. Only a few mornings ago, when our train stopped there, I could scarcely recognize the place for the great changes which



Bolivar Street, Colon, after the fire of March, 1885.





A Gruesome picture of the fire of March, 1885, in Colon.

had come over it. A new Freight and Passenger Depot had been built to meet the increased demands of the traffic there; and a group of pretty little cottages, erected by the Canal Commission for the accommodation of its employes, formed a picturesque background to this rejuvenated Station.

To-day, the only building which serves as a landmark of the Frijoles of the past, is an old two-story, whitewashed house, which stands up proudly near the Rail Road track, and which, in the year 1881, was used as a laundry, where the "Boys" of Colon sent their clothing to be washed.

Frijoles may be said to be the principal "Water Station" along the line of the Rail Road. As your train passes over the trestlework viaduct there, your attention is drawn, at once, to the swirling sound of water near by; and the first impulse that you feel, at the moment, is to put your head through the window of the car, and gaze around enquiringly, to locate the spot from which the babbling sound arose.

Then, beneath you, into a deep ravine, on

the summit of which your train is passing, you see a clear-white, crystal stream, rushing madly down the incline of a moss-grown cemented terrace, until, with spumescent bubbles, it is caught into the boiling maelstrom of the deeper pool below, and carried away on the bosom of the stronger current. Here, the native women, with their skirts raised high up to their knees, and their scant upper, garments opened wide enough to make them anatomically expressive, wash their clothes, daily, then beat them on big, white rocks with a swish!—swish!—swish! that echoes throughout the jungle.

#### GORGONA.

There has always been much to say, and much to write, about this delightful spot along the line of the Rail Road; but now there is still more, on account of the better conditions which have prevailed since the Americans went that way and, so to speak, lifted the place from out the Pompeii of the Past, to that of its present status, enjoying





Gorgona Station.





the improvements and conveniences of a modern city, hitherto unknown in the history of this district.

Gorgona is the favorite summer resort of the Panamanians, who go there, every year, to spend the Dry Season, in order to escape the dust of the Metropolis and the trying heat of the *Verano* months.

Topographically, Gorgona stands upon the summit of two slight elevations, intersected by the Rail Road lines, which divide the Station into two distinct and separate sections—the one on the left, going towards Panama, being the original Native Settlement, where there is a road branching off to a steep, narrow pathway, upon each side of which the residences of the employes of the Isthmian Canal Commission are situated.

Beyond this, after descending a tall flight of wooden stairs, you come to a trail, along the Rail Road tracks, which leads you to the immense Warehouses of the Material and Supply Department, and the I. C. C. Machine Shops, Round Houses and Foundry, the equipment of all of which will vie with

anything of their kind in the United States of America.

The Section to the right, going south, is exclusively "Canal." Here the cluster of houses, rising, gradually, on the hill, with the Music Stand, at the slope, forming a frontispiece to the whole, presents a charming picture to the eye as you look across that way. These houses, which were built by the Commission, consist mainly of hotels, school-rooms, bachelors' and married quarters, clubs, reading-rooms and hospitals, all of them screened with wire-netting in order to keep out the dreaded mosquitoes, which are now almost exterminated. There is also the Commissariat of the Panama Rail Road Company which supplies its employes, and those of the Commission, with provisions, groceries, and other necessaries of life at cost prices, and a little over to cover the expense of freight and handling.

At Gorgona, there is water installed in every house of the Commission; and an ample supply is obtainable along the streets from the hydrants which have been placed

at almost every corner, and from which the inhabitants, in general, help themselves bountifully.

To-day, Gorgona pulses with the life and activity born of the upper district of Canal operations between Bas Obispo and Culebra; for not less than one hundred and twenty-five "Work Trains" pass there daily, with their loads of rock and dirt, which are taken to Mamei and Tabernilla, two of the Stations lower down, to fill in marsh-lands, and to widen the ways for the double-tracking of the Panama Rail Road, the work of which is now in a fairly advanced condition.

As the various trains dashed by me, I thought myself of the object-lesson they afforded to one who was not a builder of the World, and I realized, at once, in this enormous traffic of common dirt and rock, the full text and meaning of the glorious work which the Americans were doing on the Isthmus.

Socially, Gorgona is not, by any means, behind the times in the programme of amusements characteristic of the other Sta-



tions along the line of the Zone to-day: It has its bachelor parties, which are given in return for the entertainments tendered by the married folks of that pleasant district; its Masonic sociables; its Saturday evening dances, and its gossipy teas, the latter intended for the sole benefit and delectation of the fair sex, because of the opportunities they offer for talking among themselves, and to a gilt-edged finish, the private business of their neighbors.

I have used the term "gossipy" advisedly; for teas, as a rule, are bound to be so when they are exclusively composed of ladies, caparisoned in tall-feathered hats, sitting around a table, leisurely sipping their tea the while they criticise the dresses which Mrs. So and So had worn at the club-dance the evening before, until all hands would exclaim, by way of a unanimous verdict:

"Oh!—didn't they look *just* horrible!"

Then, they would switch off, perhaps, to a lengthy discussion upon the subject of an imaginary purchase of some five hundred dollars worth of embroidered skirts and

blouses, which Mrs. So, they "heard," had made of an itinerant East Indian trader, who was passing through Colon; at which piece of hear-say information the barometer of the "tea" would rise to its highest pitch of curiosity and excitement, culminating in everybody asking, with a jealous ring in each voice:

"Oh, how can Mrs. 'So' afford to do such extravagant things on the small salary which her husband is getting?"—a question that would vex and tax the speculative ingenuity of any feminine gathering!

If I were asked to give my opinion of tea-parties, in general, I would not, for a moment, hesitate in saying, that they struck me as being the Parliaments for women to discuss the affairs of other people in, and to expatiate upon them, even to the extent of marring the domestic happiness of others.

But these remarks, which are altogether impersonal, are neither here nor there to the social amenities of Gorgona, that tend, no doubt, to bridge the time between Labor and

Vacation for the Boys whose sweethearts are over the boundless waters.

#### MATACHIN.

Matachin still retains the same old semblance as it did in the days of the French regime; the only perceptible difference being the presence of "Old Glory," flying above the Zone Police Station, to indicate the memorable transition from November the 3rd, 1903, to the present time of writing.

Matachin is not a very euphonious nomenclature, but the blood-thrilling incident, from which it took its origin, somewhere about the year 1852, the period of Rail Road Construction, would make a weird and gruesome page in the history of the Panama Isthmus, whenever the time shall come for it to be written. The story, according to the telling of the best-informed "Old Timers," runs this way:

It appears that a number of Chinamen, who were employed as track laborers in that section of the country, committed suicide,

daily, by hanging themselves until the entire Chinese colony was, finally, exterminated. It is said that it was a most grotesque sight to see, each morning, seven or eight of these Celestials hanging, by their necks, to the trees of the forest or, perhaps, to some post or other in the neighborhood; their lifeless forms stiffened out to a tension; their tongues protruding from their mouths—their eyes wide open and looking at you with a fixed, glassy stare through which the silver rays of the early morning sun reflected hideously!

The reason given for this self-executed carnage is, that the Chinamen, being far away from the Fatherland, had become homesick; and so, under the mad delirium of nostalgia, resorted to death as the best way out of their miseries—trusting, as they did, no doubt, to their unshaken belief in the beautiful doctrine of Confucius, which had promised them, as they had read it in their childhood days, to be taken up to heaven by means of their plaited queues.

Literally translated, from the Spanish to



English, the word "Matachin" signifies "Kill Chinaman"—hence the name by which the natives christened it in the days of the early history of the Road; the name by which it will ever be known.

Matachin has not yet felt the vigorous touch of Canal activity which characterizes some of the other Stations along the line of the Zone to-day; but the time is now rapidly approaching when she will take her place in the march of the World's great work, which is hers by right of situation, because of her being the genesis of the heaviest excavations which are yet to be done from that point to Pedro Miguel, a distance of some twelve miles.

In former years, Matachin was the meeting Station for all trains of the Panama Rail Road Company, to the passenger trains of which the natives of the village would go out with their baskets loaded down with bananas, oranges, milk and *boyo* (the last named article being a preparation of corn and rice, wrapped in leaf), which they would offer for sale to the hungry passen-

gers who, in those days were subject to a tiresome five-hour time-table for a short run of forty-seven miles between the two termini.

But, in the mad expectancy of the Natives in the near-future Canal operations in this district, those familiar scenes are relegated to the Past now; for, to-day, you look through the window of the car and listen, in vain, for the cries of "Gineos!"—"Naranjas!"—"Leche!"—"Boyo!" which you were wont to hear in former years, as the train hauled up to the Station. Even the Flower-Girl, in *Pollera*-Costume, is missing also—to say nothing of the absence of dear "Mother" Brown, who used to sharpen the appetites of the Old Rail Road Boys with her delightful cocktails, her *Jamaica* and Scotch and Rye, for the bountiful meals which she would serve them with whenever they had occasion to stop over at Matachin. Yes! all these little incidents and living landmarks, which go to make up history, have disappeared from the scenes, entirely;

but an abiding memory is tenacious of them all.

#### BAS OBISPO.

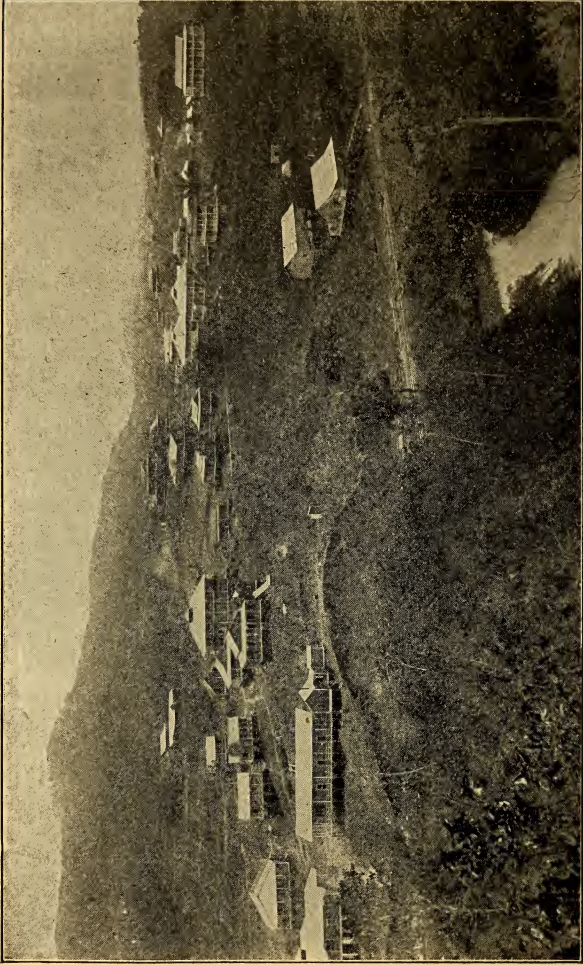
The importance of Bas Obispo, on account of the "Cut," which the French called "La Corosita," after the name of a prickly palm-tree, which grew abundantly upon a mountain in that district, is not, by any means, to be underestimated, since it involves a large share of the work in connection with the glorious and gigantic task of uniting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans—It is, so to speak, the Junior-Culebra; and who knows but what it will give as much trouble as its senior-brother, situated some five miles and a half away, reckoning from north to south?

Here, the houses, for the most part, are those which were left by the French Company, but which have since been repaired and painted by the Isthmian Canal Commission, and put into such good shape as to render them all as comfortable as the new buildings lately erected at the other Sta-



Bas Obispo in 1884 in the French days.





Bas Obispo in 1907.

tions along the line of the Zone. In their "Coats" of slate-color paint, and immaculate-white "Cuttings," which glisten beneath the rays of the early morning sun, these remnants of past French days laugh at Old Father Time, and cheat him out of the traces of the years which, on his onward journey, his relentless hand had stamped upon them!

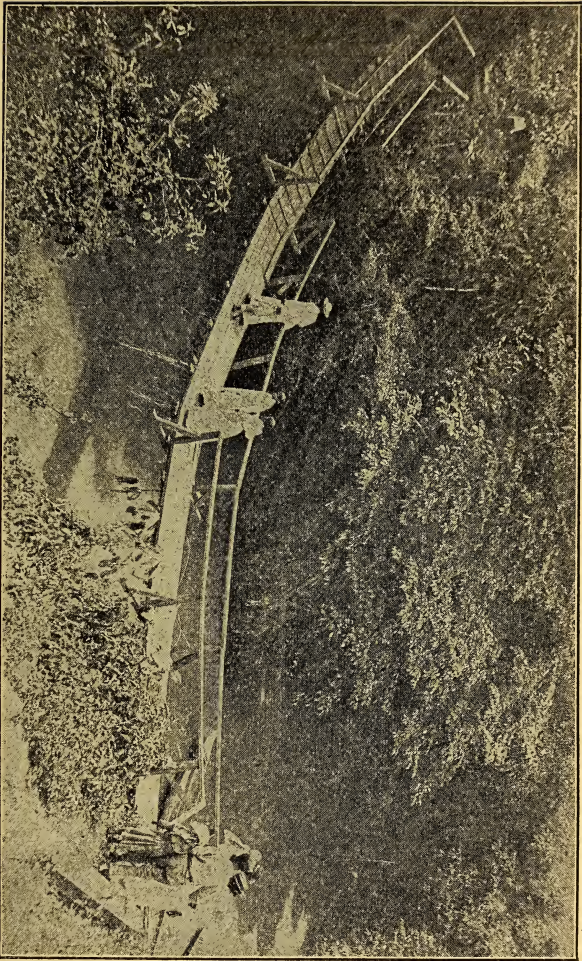
From the standpoint of an American Canal, Bas Obispo marks the first page in the history of the advent of the present administration on the Isthmus; for it was here that "Camp Elliott," the Head Quarters of the American Marines, situated on a high promontory, from which you look down upon a vast and beautiful country of low-lying hills and far-stretching valleys, clothed in perennial verdure, was first established for the purpose of accommodating some four hundred and fifty men that had arrived in Colon by the transport "Dixie," on that ever memorable night of November the 5th, 1903. Here, the "Boys" in khaki pitched their tents and mounted

their guns cheerfully, in readiness for the emergency of war, which was rumored all around as being imminent with the outwitted Colombians, and their vaunted allies, the San Blas Indians, whose combined strength was computed at something like forty-five thousand men in all. But as the days wore on, and no sign of the enemy appearing, there was less occasion to be wary, and so the "Boys" had lots of time on hand, which they dedicated to the innocent amusement of composing doggerel-rhymes, that were, finally, set to music and sung by them in every house they visited.

In chronicling the incident of the "Dixie," with which a new era for Panama began, I recall to mind another, and yet more serious, one in connection with the political happenings of that troublous and agitated period, which is bound to make an interesting chapter in the history of the Republic of Panama.

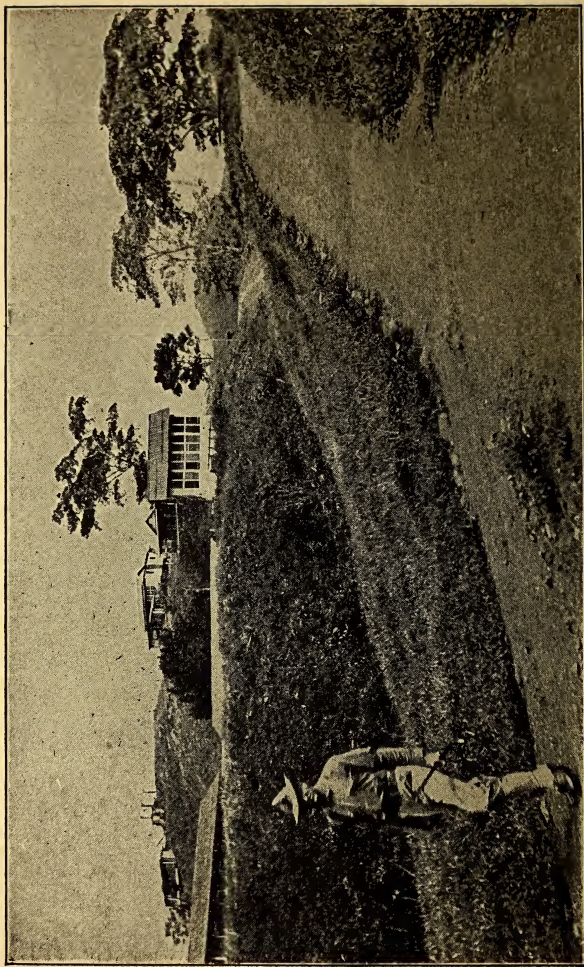
I refer to the four hundred and seventy-five Colombian Officers and Soldiers, who had threatened the Town of Colon that day,





Across the Bas Obispo River.





"Camp Elliott," the Headquarters of the American Marines.

November the 5th, 1903, against a handful of men from the United States Gun Boat "Nashville," whose number was afterwards augmented by some forty raw recruits, collected here and there in a hurry—men who had never held a gun in their lives before—men whose maiden-hands trembled nervously as they shouldered their first rifle!

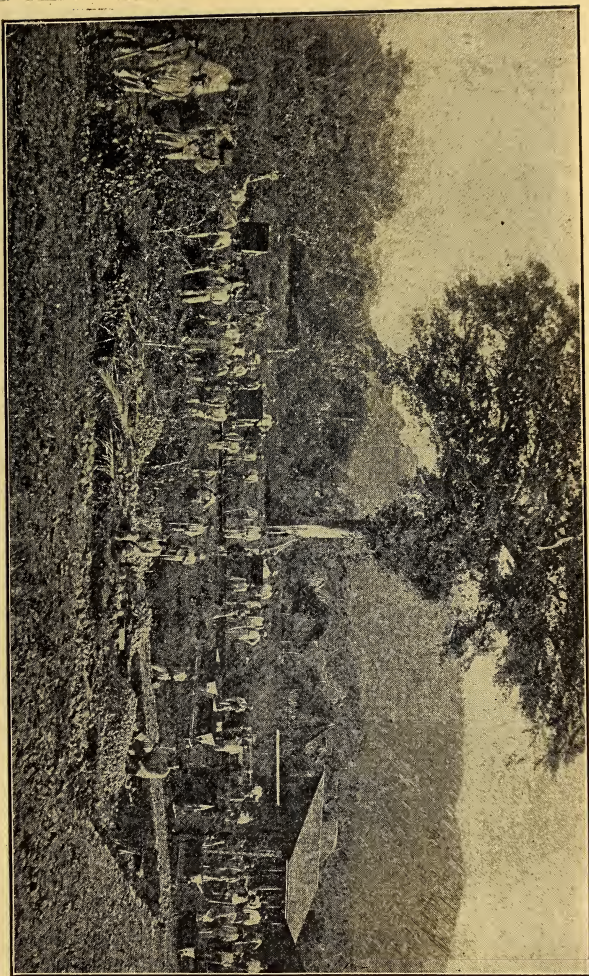
Happily, however, the necessity to open up hostilities never arose that day, which had been to each and all of us one of the type of a veritable Waterloo; excepting, of course, "The voluptuous swell of music;" "The dance and the joy unconfined;" but not the "Hurrying to and fro;" nor the "Mounting in hot haste" of the people into coaches; for everywhere you turned, there were men, women, and affrighted children—the women half dressed, and their hair disheveled—dashing madly, down the streets in search of places of refuge, which some found on board the steamers in the harbor at the time, while others, less fortunate, were compelled to hide themselves behind large bales of cotton that were piled up in

the Freight house of the Panama Rail Road Company, and which served as a barricade against a possible attack from the enemy outside. But, despite of all these necessary precautions, not a single shot was fired; for eight thousand dollars American gold, and enough champagne to drown the feelings of an inglorious defeat, had done the deed, and carried away the laurels of that anxious day, on the night of which, synchronously with the arrival of the "Dixie," the Royal Mail steamer "Orinoco," bound for Cartagena with the Army on board that had menaced Colon, moved out of her pier, the while ten thousand sighs of relief went up from the hearts of those who had begun to return to their respective homes, after three days and nights of discomfort and anxiety; deprivations and sickness; then—Presto!—The Republic of Panama.

#### EMPIRE.

If there is any Station along the line of the Zone, that has caught the full spirit of





Empire in 1883, in the French days.





Empire in 1907.

Canal operations; that has felt the thrill of the gigantic work which is going on all around it, that Station is, surely, Empire, otherwise called "Camacho," which being only one mile and a half distant from the Culebra Divide, is rendered a very important Section of the great Interoceanic Water-way.

As the train hauls up to the Passenger Depot, this fact is evidenced immediately by the busy hum of things about the place—by the clink-clank-clink of the chains of the monster steam-shovels, the echoes of countless hammers resounding through the air, the tooting of whistles in all directions, and by the distant boom of heavy charges of dynamite, all of which are unmistakable indications that life is a strenuous one in this particular part of the country. Here, there are extensive Warehouses and well-equipped Machine-Shops, in addition to which there is at present in the course of construction, an Electric Light Plant, which is calculated to light up Culebra Station as well.

The old Native Empire Settlement, situated a little distance down the tracks, looking towards the north, which for four decades had been the stopping-point of the trains running between both termini, is relegated to the dead Past now, the new Empire, having taken its place as the Freight and Passenger Station in that District, which comprises "*Camacho*," *Cunette*, *White House*, and the Native and American Empires.

The American Empire, which is one of the largest towns along the line of the Rail Road, is a most beautiful spot, nestling between a group of low-lying hills, upon whose gradual-heights the residences of the employes of the Isthmian Canal Commission are situated. In addition to these, there are the Hospital, Hotel, Public Free School and Commissariat buildings which, being of the more pretentious type of structures, rise up dwarfing the smaller houses that go to make up a picturesque cluster of the whole in spotless white and slate-color

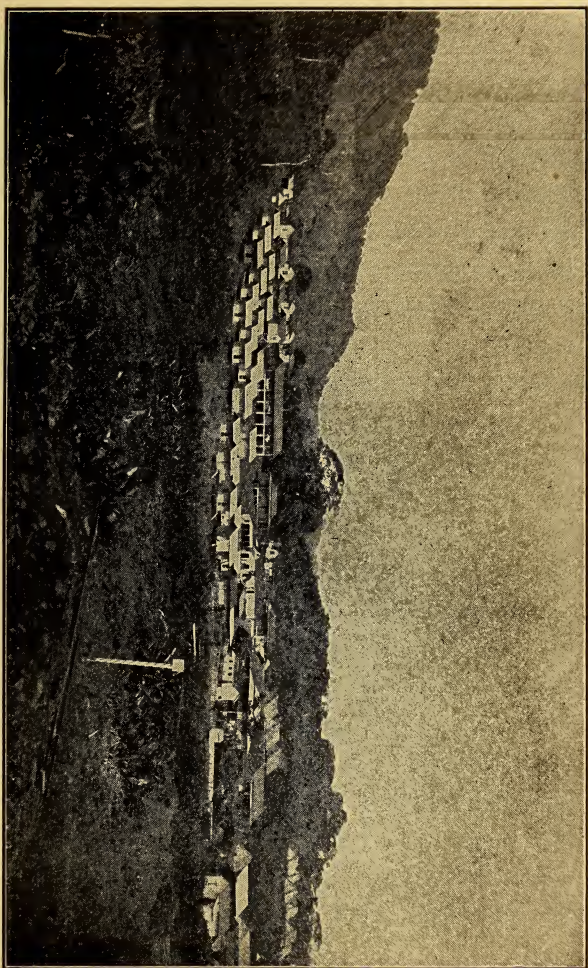
paints, that now distinguish the properties of the Isthmian Canal Commission.

As a place of residence, Empire, even to the most fastidious tastes, should leave nothing at all to be desired. Situated, as it is, upon a high elevation, and having an ample supply of good drinking water and complete modern sanitary arrangements, there is no reason why it should not be as healthy a spot as can be found in any other part of Christendom. And this is so true of Empire that the Accounting and Disbursing Departments of the Isthmian Canal Commission, whose offices were formerly located in Panama, were lately transferred there, along with their respective staffs, numbering about one hundred men, most of them being Americans.

With regard to domestic life for the married folks at Empire, this has been rendered comparatively easy and inexpensive since the inauguration of the Refrigerating-Car Service, by which system the employes of the Commission and the Panama Rail Road Company at every Station along the line,



enjoy the incalculable boon of being furnished, daily, with fresh meats, fruits and vegetables of all descriptions, eggs, cow's milk and ice, all of which, excepting the latter article, manufactured in Colon, are brought over to the Isthmus from the best markets of the United States of America. And yet, despite of these immense advantages, hitherto unknown in this part of the world, there are lots who are not satisfied, and kick about prices which, however, when compared with those charged by the local merchants for inferior articles of consumption, whose assortment is not, by any means, varied, the balance in the scale of comparison will, invariably, result in favor of the imported commodities. But then, I suppose there must be "kickers" in every sphere and clime, the Isthmus not excluded; for it boasts of many who can well be termed Born-kickers—free, easy and extemporaneous Kickers, who will kick, even though there is nothing absolutely to kick about, until their last day upon this side of Eternity.



Culebra in 1884, in the French days.



## CULEBRA.

Culebra! Who has not heard of Culebra? Since the month of January, 1880, when the French began operations, Culebra has been on the tongues of men, the world over, as a thing unachievable—as an engineering impossibility!

The French, however, who had prepared their plans well, and had studied them out carefully, paid no attention, whatever, to this expression of opinion, which they knew, as an absolute fact, had emanated from those who were friends of Nicaragua, and, consequently, sworn and open enemies of the favored Panama route, but proceeded, at once, with the tremendous task of demolishing the Culebra Mountain, in the performance of which they proved to the world, at large, the feasibility of their scheme, and did good work until 1888, when, as many of us have good reasons to remember, operations were, suddenly, suspended.

Then came an idle lapse of some fifteen



long years of weary, patient waiting—fifteen years of great suspense and anxiety—hoping, each day, that something would turn up to save the increasing gravity of the situation which, from a financial and commercial standpoint, had just begun to threaten the whole Isthmus with ruin, when the Americans came to the rescue, and thus averted the crisis that seemed inevitable.

Let us admit that there have been serious engineering difficulties to contend with at Culebra; but, on the other hand, let us admit, also, that there have been men at the helm of affairs, in this district, endowed with the necessary skill and ability to cope with those difficulties which, to-day, are, happily, surmounted through the indomitable will of those who have identified themselves with the great Culebra problem.

That the judgment, therefore, pronounced by the enemies of Panama, with regard to the impracticability of Culebra, was, altogether, without foundation, the work done by the French, in their day, and the progress made by the Americans, since

1903 up to the present time of writing, in themselves, alone, are ample proof and testimony.

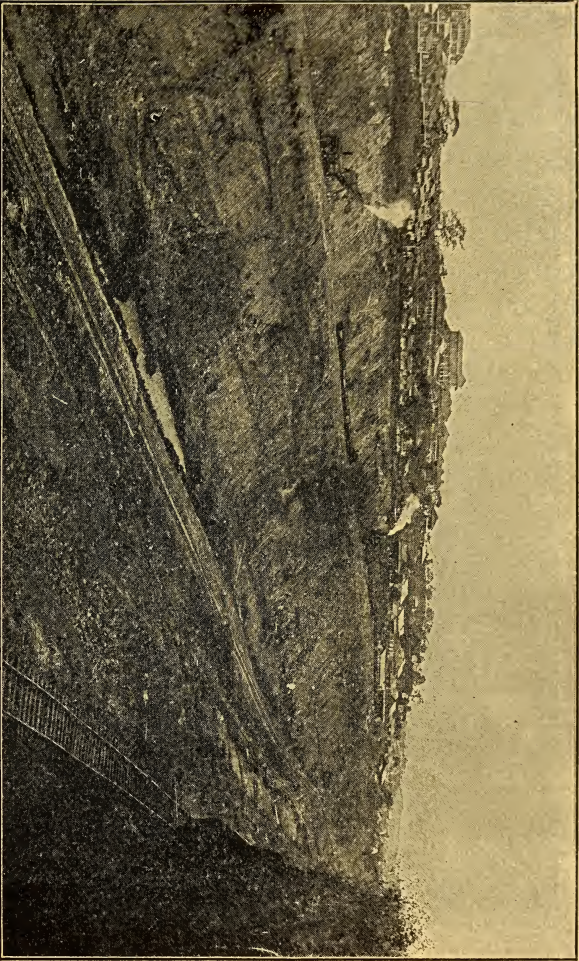
But the simple telling of it, on my part, could never convey to the mind of the reader, the full extent of what has, really, been accomplished at this important Section of the Canal. The magnitude of it all must first be seen before it can be intelligently appreciated, even by those who saw Culebra in her virgin integrity, in her pristine glory, compared to what she is, to-day,—a wreck of her former magnificence!

The Americans have done good work at Culebra; and what of course, has contributed largely to this has been the use of up-to-date machinery, such as the steam-shovel, for instance, which is the backbone and sinew of the work of building the Canal across the Panama Isthmus. Culebra, besides being the objective point to-day, is the keynote of the whole gigantic undertaking, and the dream of Mr. John F. Stevens, the Chief Engineer, who is interested, heart and soul, in the final demolition of the Cule-

bra Mountain down to a point below the level of the sea!

Culebra, of course, is the busiest Section of all. In the "Cut," blasting goes on almost continually; and some heavy "charges" have been set off lately. The heaviest of these was the one which contained six thousand pounds of dynamite and twenty-five tons of black powder, which scattered fifty thousand cubic yards of rock and dirt in one great heap!

The day I paid a visit to this Section of the Works, everything that wore wheels appeared to me to have been in motion, each one vieing with the other in the race for the goal of the World's great work: There were "dump-trains" moving, one after the other, in rapid succession, along the banks of the "Cut"; engines puffed away and snorted busily; and, last, though not the least, a fleet of steam-shovels in operation, all of them telling, in their own see-saw vernacular, of the glorious thing they were doing for the benefit of the nations of the World! The graceful motion of their sharp-teethed



The Great Cut in Panama.





The Great Culebra Cut—a charge of 6,000 lbs. of Dynamite  
25 Tons Black Powder going up into the air!

dippers, as they swung, to and fro, around their tireless chains, stopping mid-way to plunge deep down into the bosom of Mother Earth for their prey of rock and dirt, which they picked up greedily and finally disgorged into old French "dumps" or W. W. Scrapper Cars, with a loud burst of white-steam-laughter that curled up into the air and resounded through the "Cut" triumphantly, impressed me with the idea that these monster things, but mere parts of machinery assembled together as a unit, were almost as sentient as human beings themselves.

On the occasion of President Roosevelt's late visit to the Isthmus, and which, by the way, has immortalized Panama and the Panama Canal, he related to a large and representative audience, at a reception given in his honor at Cristobal, on the night of November the 17th, that, in the course of his examination of the Works, he had stopped at Culebra, where he had seen over one of the steam-shovels in operation, a banner which bore the legend:

“WE WILL HELP YOU TO CUT IT!”

Then, as his special train moved further on the way, he said, a fellow hailed out to him:

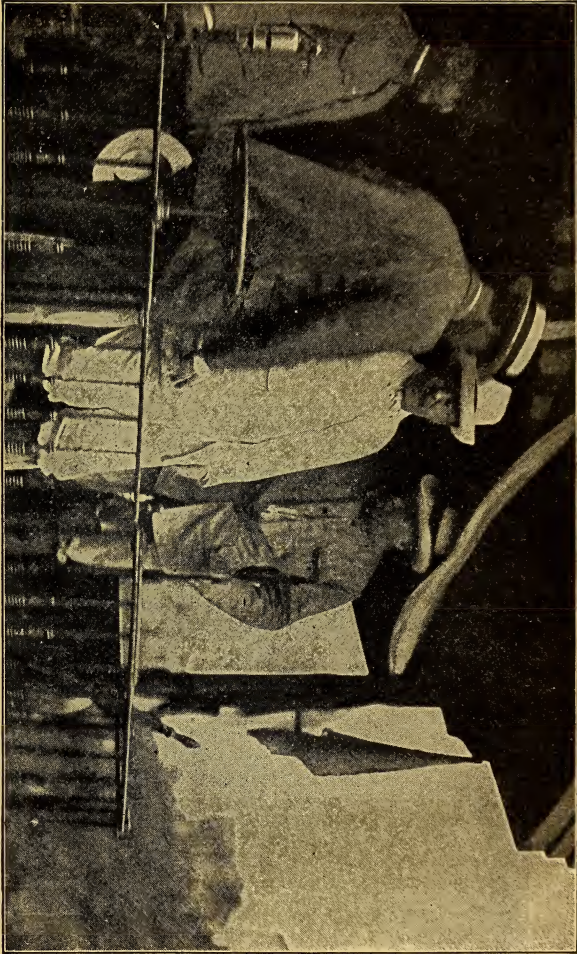
“WE’RE GOING TO PUT IT  
THROUGH!”

Both of which, the President explained to us, had pleased him immensely, because, he remarked, he admired the spirit that actuated the sentiment of the two.

Culebra is the highest point, and the largest Station, along the line of the Rail Road. The American settlement of this important district is reached by a continuous winding pathway, that leads up to the Administration and other buildings, situated upon the summit of the hill, from which point you get a most wonderful bird’s eye view of the surrounding country and the “Cut,” both of which teem with the life and activity commensurate with the immensity of the Cause.

Culebra being the headquarters of the Chief Engineer, and also his seat of residence, is rendered, officially and socially,





President Roosevelt and Party going through the Cutlebra  
Cut on a Special Train—Car "La France."





The Residence of Mr. Jno. F. Stevens, Chief Engineer, at Culebra.

the most important Station on the Zone—the pillar of the one part being well supported by the gentleman of the hour; while the amenities of the other are ably executed by his amiable Lady who, by her charming manners, has succeeded in making herself the most popular figure among the best social circles on the Isthmus.

At Culebra, the Panama Rail Road branches off to a comparatively new line, called "The Deviation," built by the French, and inaugurated on the 3rd day of March, 1901, and which opened up the loveliest bit of country and scenery to be found in any part of South or Central America.

"The Deviation" is five miles long; and about one mile and a half from where it begins, there is an Iron Bridge, one hundred and twenty-five feet long, spanning the "Rio Grande," which was dammed into a lake in order to divert the course of the waters of the rivers from the Canal Works at Culebra.

The lake is beautiful! In its silent, glassy depths are mirrored, inverted, the stately

mountain-peaks, green with the growth of ages past; and tall and graceful-bending bamboos fringe the edges of its uncomplaining waters.



A bit of the Culebra Deviation.



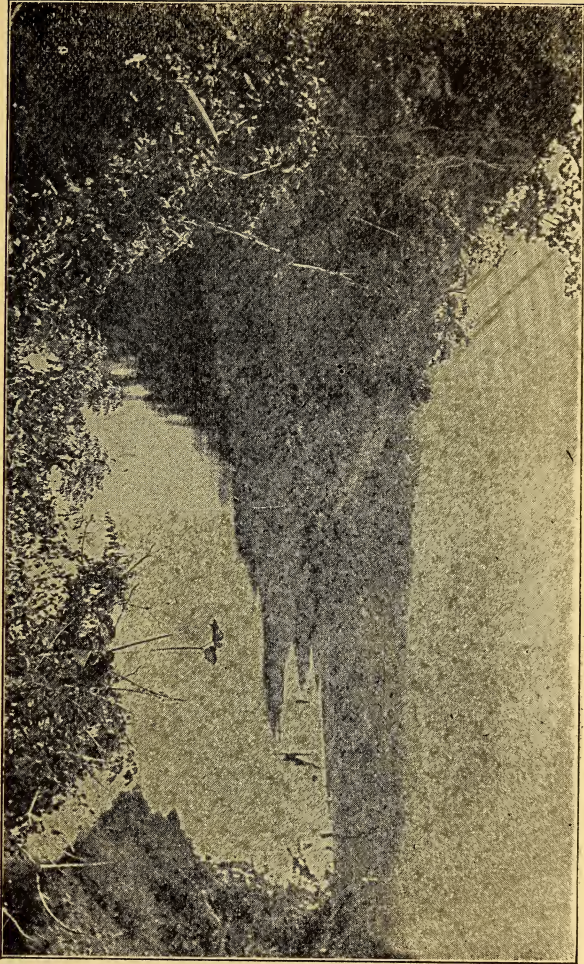
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## PART VI.

The present City of Panama, which was founded in the year 1519, is situated about five miles and a half west of the original city, known, to-day, as "Old Panama," which was captured by Buccaneer Morgan and his handful of daring adventurers on the 28th of January, 1671, and immediately afterwards reduced to ashes, because it was discovered by Morgan that he had been cleverly outwitted by the Panamanians who, anticipating the attack on the city, had placed on board of a vessel lying in the harbor, all the gold and silver ornaments of the convents and the churches, the King's silver and jewels, as well as all the other valuables belonging to private individuals. For, at the time written of, Old Panama was the distributing centre of the rich countries of the South, such as Chili and Peru, for the immense cargoes of treasure, which were

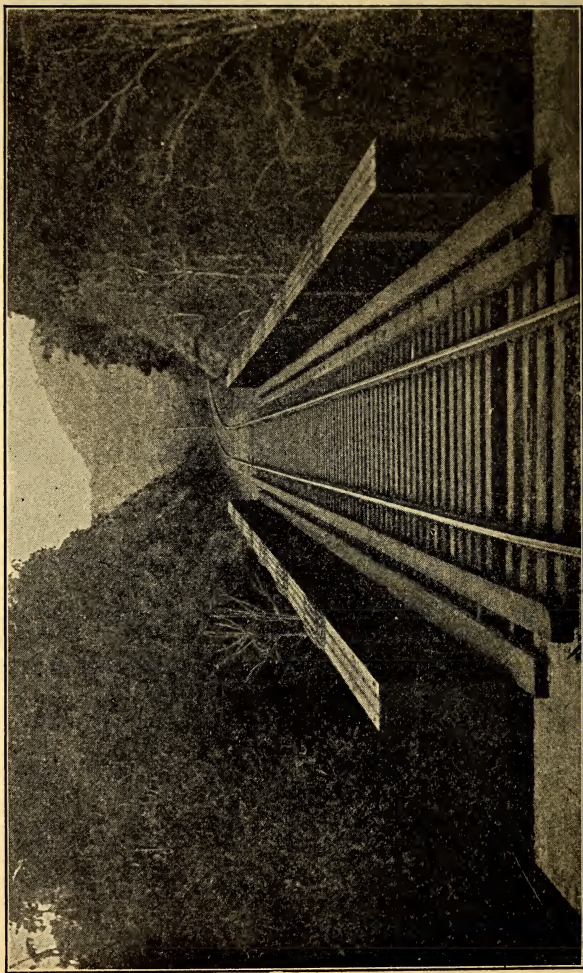
constantly arriving for the King of Spain, who was Charles the Second, and which were transported on mule-back to Porto Bello, a small harbor on the Atlantic seaboard, where the Spanish fleet awaited the precious merchandise for conveyance to its final destination.

Panama is not a city of any architectural pretensions, but it boasts of a few fine buildings, which might, possibly, pass muster before the scrutiny of experienced eyes that have seen better in other countries. Foremost among these buildings are: the Bishop's Palace, the Grand Central Hotel, and the General Offices of the Isthmian Canal Commission, to all of which there will soon be added the new Theatre that is now in the course of construction. In addition to these, there is the new and magnificent I. C. C. "Tivoli Hotel," situated upon a high promontory at the entrance of Panama, and which has the distinguished honor of having accommodated President Roosevelt and his party during their short stay on the Isthmus.



The Rio Grande Lake.





Bridge spanning the Rio Grande.

As in all other Spanish-American countries, the majority of the houses in Panama are massive stone structures built in the days of Spanish domination; but the buildings which are now going up, betray marked signs of the more modern school of architecture.

The principal public thoroughfares and places of interest, are two Parks: one in the *Plaza Santana*, and the other in the *Cathedral Square*. Then, there is the *Bovedas*, or Sea-wall, a powerful fortification which overlooks the beautiful Pacific Ocean and the distant Islands in the harbor. At each of these three resorts, the National Band, consisting of some thirty pieces, delights the ears of the lovers of music with a concert weekly.

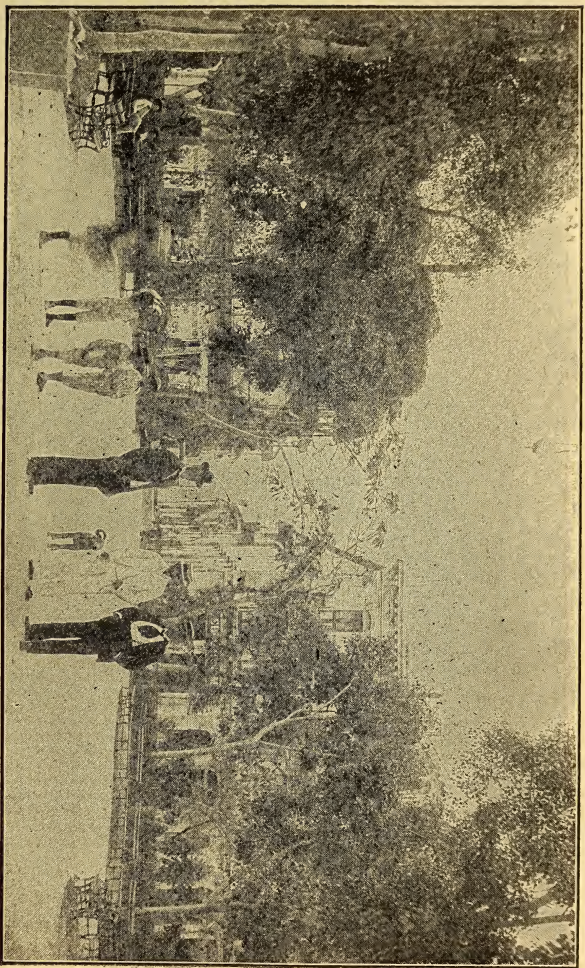
Since the advent of the Americans on the Isthmus, Panama has undergone some remarkable improvements. The streets, that were once of cobblestones, difficult and uncomfortable to walk upon, are now, almost all of them, paved with bricks imported from the United States for the purpose.

The *Agüadores*, that formerly went about the city on their two-wheeled barrel-carts, selling water to the inhabitants, by the bucket, the only means of supply in those days, have now been superseded by the installation of an up-to-date system of Water-Works, which, so far, has been one of the greatest boons conferred on the city, for the reason that it has afforded the means of proper sewerage and good sanitary arrangements, that have contributed so largely to improve the health conditions of Panama.

At Ancon, on the outskirts of the city, and within the boundaries of the Zone, the magnificent hospitals of the Commission are situated 'midst the luxuriant growth of palms and cocoanut-trees, which are fanned by the soft, refreshing breezes of the Pacific.

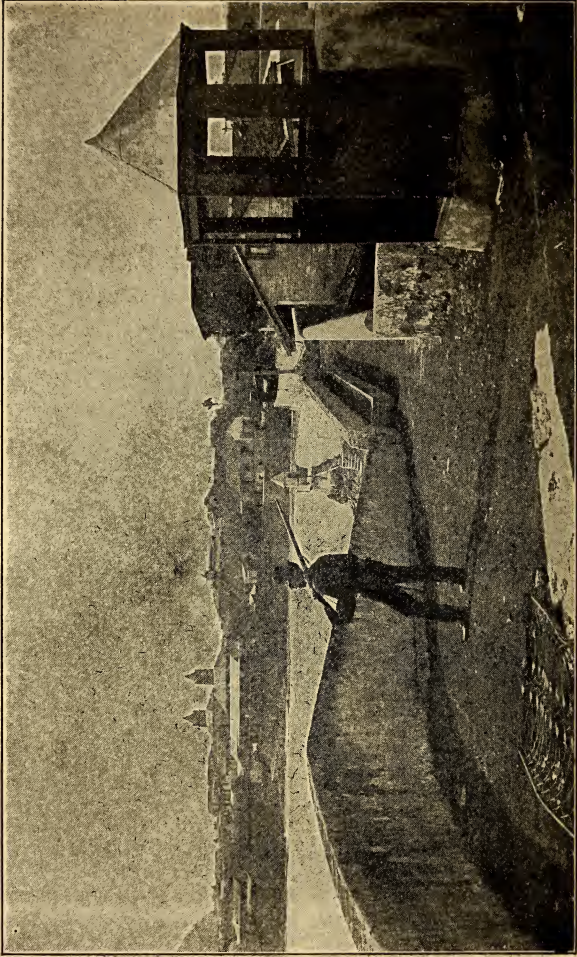
The population of Panama is variously estimated, but, in the absence of an official census, I do not think I will be far wrong in setting the figures down to 35,000 souls, al-





The Cathedral Square, Panama.





The Bovedas, Panama.

most every one speaking the English language fairly.

The Panamanians are a kind and intelligent lot of people—hospitable to strangers always; and no one is better able to testify to these facts than I am, having resided on the Isthmus, and been associated with the sons of Panama, for a checkered period that covers some thirty-three years and over.

In Panama, as they are in almost every other small city of the world, the pleasures of social life are somewhat “slow” and limited. Occasionally, however, there is a break in the dull round and monotony of things, either by a dance at the “International,” or by some musical entertainment at the “Commercial,” the two most prominent clubs in the City. Then, on Sundays, or on any other day of leisure in the week, there is the pleasure, for those who are fond of outdoor sports, of mounting a good, swift steed and riding far out to the sunny forest, and to the beautiful Savannas of Panama.

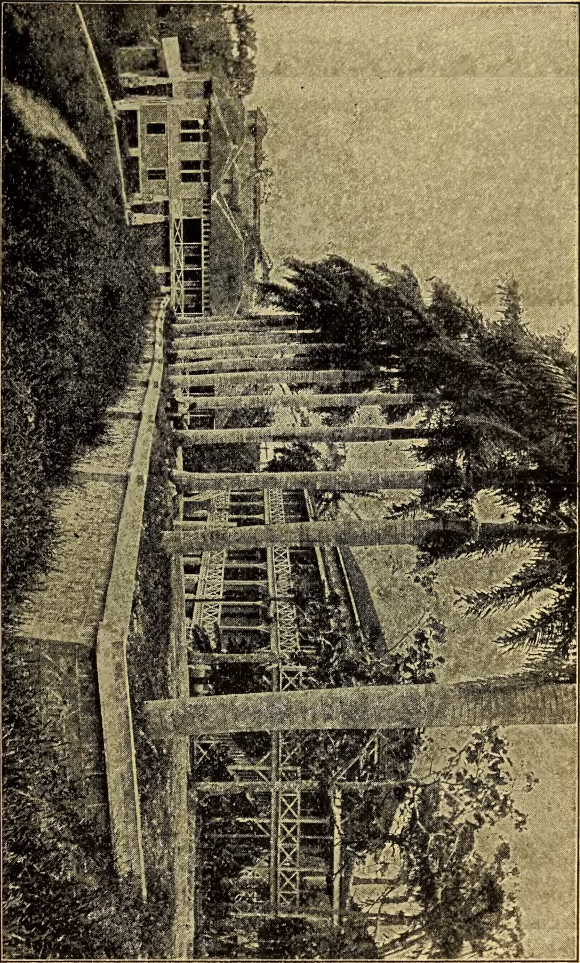
## PART VII.

About two miles distant from Panama, is the seaport on the American Zone, known as *La Boca*, which is situated at the mouth of the *Rio Grande*, the Pacific entrance of the Canal.

Besides being a busy Canal centre, *La Boca* is an important Shipping-district, and an enormous Rail Road Yard and Terminus, where all freights, coming from and destined to the ports of the Pacific, pass through on their way to their final destinations.

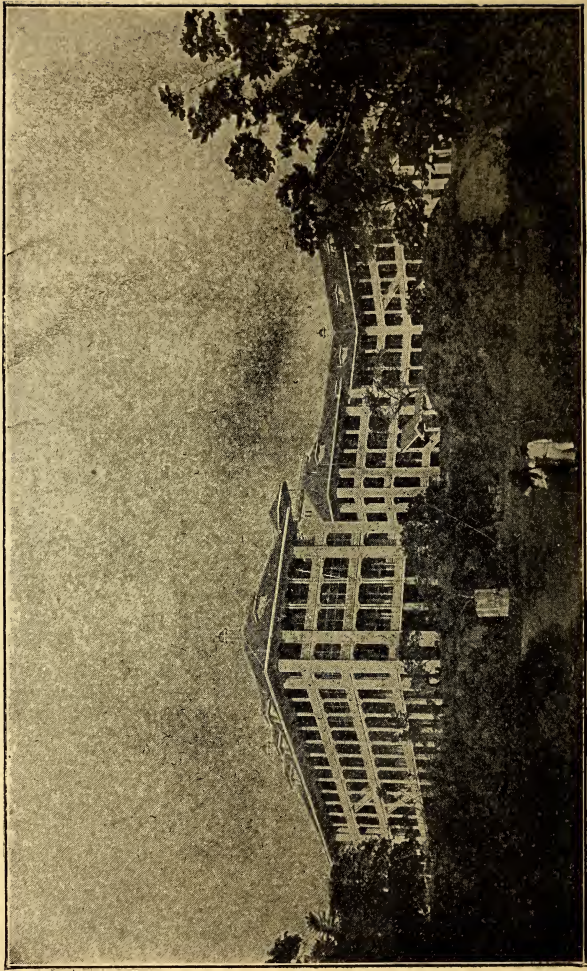
*La Boca* is provided with improved and ample shipping facilities. There are two extensive piers there in constant operation; one built in the days of the French, and the other by the present regime for the accommodations of the increased Commercial, Rail Road and Canal traffic across the Panama Isthmus.





The I. C. C. Hospitals at Ancon, Panama.





The I. C. C. Tivoli Hotel at Panama.

Both piers, to-day, are, more or less, temporary compromises for the Canal, on account of the advantage they offer to the steamers, of loading and discharging their cargoes direct from, and to, the cars of the Panama Rail Road Company, instead of having to do so in the stream, by means of lighters, as was the custom formerly, and which necessitated extra shifting and handling that incurred additional mutilation of cargoes.

The first steamer to dock at *La Boca*, was the United States Ship "Ranger," which was ordered there by the Administration at Washington, for the purpose of taking soundings of the Basin and the Channel leading up to the pier, which was built by the French Company; with the result that the "Ranger" was quickly followed by the Pacific Mail Steamer "Costa Rica," which inaugurated the new service that is now in full and successful operation at *La Boca*, one of the busiest harbors on the Pacific Coast.

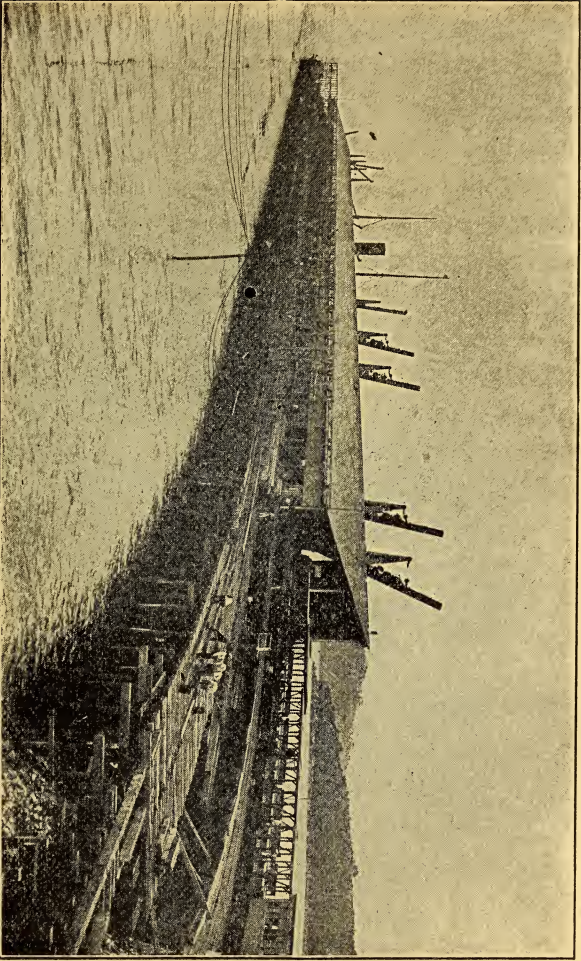
The day I went there on a visit, the two

piers were full of life and activity, and veritable pandemoniums of Labor; for, in their mad haste and eager endeavor for supremacy in the art of truck-wheeling, good-natured truck-men jostled against each other frequently, while the powerful trolley-transporters swung their heavy sling-loads around with a pendulum-like regularity, and a whir!—whir!—whir! and then deposited their burdens on the piers.

At *La Boca* there are extensive Machine-shops, operated by the Commission, where the repairs for all the Floating Canal Equipment, such as tugs, clappets and dredges, are effected daily. In addition to which there are, of course, the usual buildings for the accommodation of the employes of the Commission and the Panama Rail Road Company; hospitals for the sick, and hotels and mess-rooms for the satisfaction of the inner man.

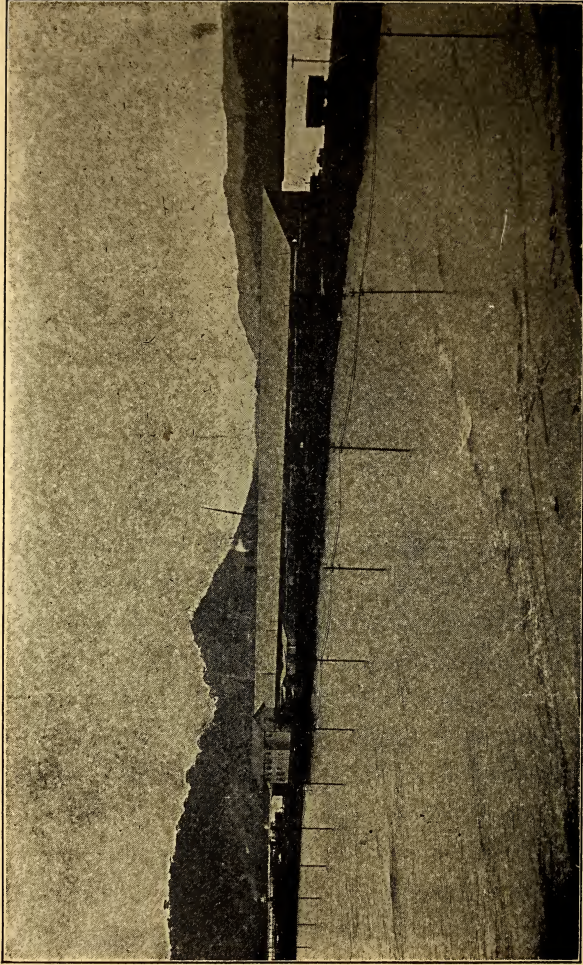
No one should come to the Isthmus without paying a visit to *La Boca*, the Gateway of the Canal on the Pacific, the betrothed of the Atlantic Ocean.





Steel Pier at La Boca, on the Pacific side, built by the French.





Pier at La Boca, on the Pacific side, built by the I. C. C.

## PART VIII.

The work of building the great Water-way across the favored Panama route, has served as a most powerful magnet in the way of attracting all sorts and conditions of people to the Isthmus from almost every quarter of the Globe; for a more cosmopolitan collection of the human races than that we have among us to-day, does not, I believe, exist in any other part of the universe: There are Americans, British, French, Germans, Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, Colombians, Danish, Peruvians, Central Americans, East Indians, and, of course, an abundance of the ever ubiquitous Chinese, who have all tended, largely, to change our local color and the aspect of our surroundings and environments. Many, even, of our old historical land-marks have disappeared from these scenes entirely, in order to make room for Canal operations; and, to judge from the

present outlook of things, the time is not far distant when the few remaining ones shall have completely vanished and have been succeeded by the greatest Work that man has ever yet conceived or attempted.

The labor chiefly employed to work on the Canal is made up of a somewhat motley gathering of Jamaicans, Barbadians, Martiniquenians, St. Lucians, Spaniards, Italians and Cartegenians, with a possibility of an augmentation of these classes by the introduction, later on, of the progressive Japanese. Yet, strange to say, and also wonderful to contemplate, that, notwithstanding this mixed assembly of peoples, all working side by side together, in the name of the one great Cause, there has been so little, if any at all, of crime on the Isthmus of Panama; but this, no doubt, is due, firstly, to the combined Police regulations of the Panama and the United States Governments in the strict maintenance of peace and order, and, secondly, to the law-abiding natures of the aliens. And yet, for my part, I do not believe in such a cosmic gathering; it is dan-

gerous, because it sometimes leads to disturbances between the different races of men, whose respective tastes and languages, characteristics and temperaments, are so widely apart from each other. The French brought the Africans to the Isthmus, and they made no end of trouble for us, even to the last day, when eight hundred of them marched in to Colon, from Culebra, and, with razors and knives, defied the, then, Colombian policemen just at the entrance of Cristobal!

The Spaniards, it has been said, are very good workmen, and I think, myself, they are too; and the Japanese have been mentioned as a probable solution of the labor problem; but it is my forcible and candid opinion, based upon many long years' experience in this country, that the Jamaica Negro is the fellow to dig the Canal: he is accustomed to the climate, and can better adapt himself to the prevailing conditions on the Isthmus than any of the men of the other nationalities I have just mentioned here.

And now for a few words more before



closing this paper. I trust it will not be thought by any of my readers, that I have posed in these pages either as the self-constituted "Trumpeter" of Panama, or as the mouth-piece of the Panamanians. I have simply wished to fulfil the duty, which I have long felt was mine, as an old resident of the Isthmus, of endeavoring, in my own little humble way, to convince the prejudiced minds that, after all, we are not such a "heap, bad lot from away back," as many of our unfriendly and *aided* critics, abroad, have magazined and newspapered us to be.

As a lover of the Truth, I must frankly admit that we have not yet reached that stage of perfection, which is beyond reproach and unfavorable criticism, towards the happy goal to which we are trending daily; for there are still a few flaws that yet need mending. On the other hand, however, it should also be conceded that the Republic of Panama, as an Independent Nation, and as the Ruler of her own destinies, is, so to speak, in the infancy of years: The rough edges found here and there in her Ashler to-

day, will be worn away as Time rolls onward to the Future!

As for our Critics, let me say that, taking them on the whole, they have been a most wonderfully gifted assortment of people in their utter lack of knowledge of the Isthmus, its past and present conditions, its topography and its environment of to-day.

For a stranger to sit in a Rail Road car, whirled away at an average speed of something like twenty-five miles an hour, and think, by just gazing, cursorily, through the window, that, he, or she, could write a faithful report of a country so rapidly traversed, is, to my mind, as ridiculous as it is impossible! Yet much to the chagrin of the Panamanians, and to the disgust of the many friends of the Isthmus, has this marvelous feat been attempted.

The Isthmus of Panama is exactly what we make it, by our mode of living, our conduct, and our habits generally. If men *will* come here and turn night into day, committing indiscretions in over-drink and all other kinds of imprudence, as they have,

oftentimes, done, the result, as it would be in any other part of the world, must be patent and obvious. Yet almost every case of sickness and death that has occurred here from time to time, has, invariably, been chalked down, in great, big letters, against the climate of the Isthmus, whose health conditions, notwithstanding, will compare most favorably with those of any other country in the Tropics, and, perhaps, with those of some places in the North also—a statement that may seem chimerical to some, but all the same the Truth, for which I have, as testimony, the official figures of our limited mortality, the percentage of which is far below that of any of the larger cities in the world.

Whatever may be said to the contrary, the Isthmus, within the past two years or more, has made wonderful progress in the way of general improvements.

Socially, we have had some very valuable acquisitions with the constant influx of people from abroad; and yet, I am compelled to confess, Society on the Isthmus is a verita-

ble Study—not in “Scarlet,” but in every color of the rainbow! For the dominant feature is that everybody wants to be “It,” and no one will consent to be subject—at least, not those who can boast of birth and lineage, good-breeding and education, but from whom, oftentimes, POSITION, and not the man himself, withholds the keys of the Parlors!

Morally, the Americans have done a great deal towards improving the tone of the lower classes, among whom concubinage, at one time, was woefully rampant. As a result, however, of the enforcement of the law against this mode of living, not less than twenty-five marriages occur daily on the Zone.

Finally, I wish to testify to the truth of all the statements which I have made here—they are the plain truth; nothing but the truth; even if they do “hurt” those who are enemies of the Isthmus, and who are inimical to the building of the great Interoceanic Water-way across the favored Panama route.



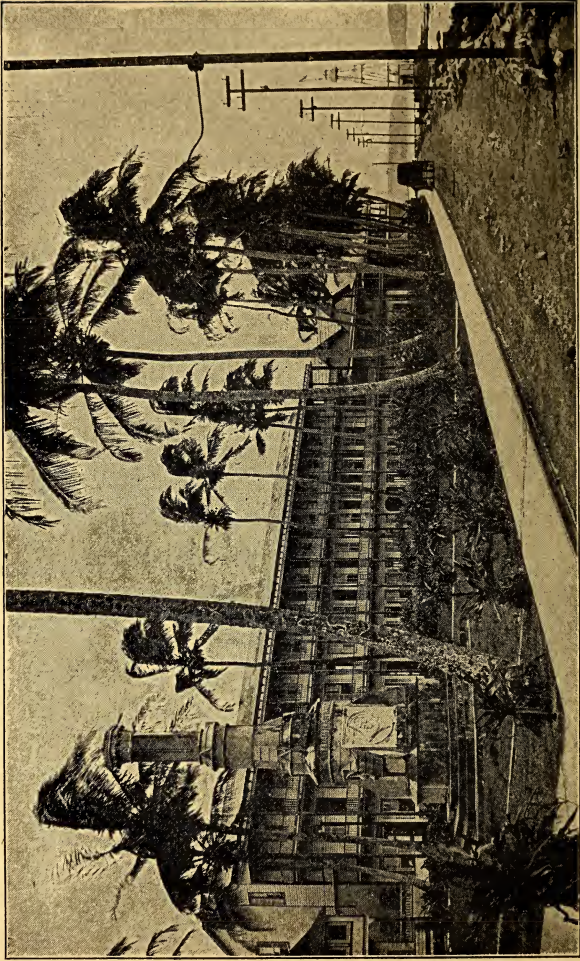


A TALE OF THE  
OLD WASHINGTON HOUSE



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The Old Washington House.

# A Tale of the Old Washington House, Colon.

## I.

It was in the early Seventies. The *Washington House* that stood then, flanked on both sides by stately cocoanut-trees, was merely a shapeless pile of woodwork that, so to speak, tottered upon the crutches of its senility! For, for almost two decades, the building had been the sport and prey of every wind and weather, beneath the ever recurring stress of which, as the years rolled on, it gradually fell to decay, until, at last, it listed towards the sea-front heavily.

The windows, nearly all of them, were *blind* for the want of glasses; and the laths of the shutters, moist with the rime of the salt-sea air of years and years and years, hung loosely down, like so many dilapidated wooden pendants, with which the breezes toyed and rioted madly.

The rooms were half the size of those of its now more pretentious successor, and the walls were thickly crusted with whitewash coatings, that constantly fell upon the painted floors in large thick scales, white as the snows that drop from heaven! But good old Tom, the Bedroom Steward, was always "on deck," at shoulder-arm with his ubiquitous corn-broom, ready, like little Orphan Annie, to sweep the fallen debris away, and clear from every nook and corner the festoon and embroidery of cobwebs that, Hydra-like, sprang up constantly, despite of good old Tom, who finally proved himself to be no Hercules for them.

Notwithstanding the simplicity of the building, right happy days were those of the *Washington House* of old! There was, in every sense of the word, a true and genuine comradeship among the boys—the maddest, merriest lot one ever came across in Christendom—up to all kinds of tricks, the successful perpetration of which, such was the *entente cordiale*, was never known to evoke a serious protest from the chap whose every

stick of furniture, bed and bedstead alike, had been taken from his room while he was out at night, and cast over the balcony on to the wet green lawn in front, to remain there till he returned to lift them up the steps himself, and put them back again in their places; nor yet from the fellow who, by some daring piece of mendacity, had been divested of his property. No! In those days a practical joke met rather with pleasing applause than with any word or act or sign of protest; so much so, that one joke was quickly followed by another, in which the last victim would endeavor to get even with his latest perpetrator. But then, it was not to be wondered at that each man accepted his "dose" with such good grace and humor; for the boys of that time were, so to speak, a brotherhood of one. No tales were "carried out of school" when one had been taken home on the proverbial "shutter;" nor yet when another had been down the night before at Valdez's to spin the magic wheel, or, haply, to dance the *cumbia* with Zoila! All this was kept as sacred as the



secrets that characterize the great Masonic Fraternity.

With the exception of Jimmy Ward, Mackenzie, and Mike Devlanete, P. M. S. S. Co.'s men, the rest of the household was made up of Rail Road boys, who were :

Slim Frankinton, Train Despatcher, Fred Hudsin, Commissary, W. Winchester, Assistant Cashier, A. Sharpe, Secretary to the General Superintendent, and C. Walker, Road Master. There were also the employes of the lesser rank, of course, such as Scotty, Hendersin, Thatcher, Guthrie and George Dranrab, Check Clerks all of them.

Then, there was dear old Billy Thomson, who occupied a room in the building. He was not connected with the Road in the days written of; but he had been once, in almost every position—down from Trackman up to the more exalted position of General Superintendent, from which he resigned to enter the local mercantile arena. Thomson was the soul-embodiment of a gentleman! Through his kind and courteous manners, he had won for himself a tender spot in all

the hearts of the boys, who delighted to respect and honor him. There were no "frills" about Billy Thomson at all; he took as much pleasure sitting down spinning yarns to the boys as he did conversing with the G. S. of the Road; and he was always to be found at the little *seances* held from time to time in the dear old *Washington House*. "When trouble was in the wind," as the saying goes, it was from Billy Thomson always that the boys would seek advice, and it was his "word," too, that "went" with them always.

Among the Rail Road crowd, Scotty, though somewhat brusque in his manners, was the general favorite; for, despite of the sixty years that had crowned his head with silver, he was the life and soul and music of the building, even if he did swear like a trooper! Scotty was a Scotchman every inch of him but one, and that was in his—liquor; for, strange to say, he was never known to touch the firewater of his country. Brandy, instead, was his *poison*, and of this he constantly kept a bottle behind an old leathern trunk of his he had brought from

England with him, and which, a wreck since of its former magnificence, stood within a quiet corner of his bedroom, instead of taking its place in the graveyard of cast-off and unserviceable packages! To this trunk, or, rather, to the narrow little dusty corridor, that ran between it and the wall, Scotty was wont to pay frequent visits daily—he and himself alone! For as for asking any of the boys to accompany him in a *trago*, that was out of the question entirely! In fact, he had grown of late so supremely watchful of his liquor, that he never once failed, as Tom declared, to mark, with his ever wary eyes, the ebb-tide of the bottle each time he picked it up to help himself, which he invariably did most liberally. Finally, he became so orthodox in his principle of inviting no one into his room to have a drink with him, that Slim Frankinton, in a conference held one night with Fred Hudsin, decided, there and then, to get square with Scotty on the very first opportunity that offered, and thus teach him a lesson for the future.

## II.

Time, that swings his pendulum incessantly, had brought the New Year's Eve around, and the *Washington House* was decked out in full regalia of Chinese lanterns and multicolored bunting, in celebration of the occasion that marks the passing of one year, and heralds the advent of another!

On the lawn, fronting the seashore, there was deep-mouthed eloquence of fire-works, and the pandemonium was simply deafening! The boys, it appears, had made up their minds to enjoy themselves on that night above all others—which they did, too, to their very hearts' content. Some of them, with crimson-cracker in hand, ensconced themselves behind the cocoanut-trees, and, in a second, dashed out again with their lighted fire-devils, and tossed them at each



other in a game of mimic warfare. A mad, glad, New Year's Eve was that—full of pleasant memories; but of those who figured in the association of that dead time, few are left to tell its until-now-unwritten story.

Scotty was the only one who had not joined the party on the lawn; he had had a day's hard work of it on the Dock, checking a heavy shipment of nails, which had come by the New York steamer, destined for San Francisco; so he sat upon the balcony alone, and watched the proceedings below.

It was not long, however, before he fell into a deep slumber; and, as was his wont, began rehearsing in his sleep the fights he had had with his call-boy, and other little incidents, too, in connection with his day's checking——

"M. C. H. in a diamond, 5 kegs, Sir!" he broke out suddenly. Hang it! why the devil don't you sing out louder? Can't hear a G— d— word you say!—how many was it?"

"Five kegs, Sir, and tally!"——

"You're a liar!" roared Scotty—"Hi, there, Lisha! hold on with your truck,

will you? It's all right; you can go ahead now: five and tally it is."

Then, after a while, he broke loose again into a wild fit of vituperation, which, sand-papered down, and passed through the finest crucible, would reduce itself to language nothing less refined than:

"Hell! I wish the man who shipped these nails had every one of them stuck into his blasted ribs—damn him!"

But here, his dream was interrupted by a great red flash and a sputter and a boom! crack! bang! beneath the chair he sat in, which started him from his sleep with such a sudden bound that he was almost precipitated over the tottering balcony!

White with rage, he rose up to his full height, shook his clenched fists menacingly at the crowd on the lawn, and yelled out vociferously:

"I'd like to know who the h— it was that did that! Show me the fellow and I'll lick the life out of him right now!" With which he turned around quickly apparently with the object of putting his threat into execu-

tion, when, lo! Hendersin, his dearest companion, stood before him just at the entrance of the hallway, immediately behind where he had been sitting. As they confronted each other, Hendersin gave a broad guffaw, and, with some difficulty, raised his hand and rested it on Scotty's shoulder, saying, somewhat incoherently:

"Sh—say,—Sh—Scotty,—old—chap,—hic I—did—it,—see? —and—hic—what—about it? —Want—ter—fight? —sh—better—not, — Sh—Scotty,—i'—sh—New—Year— hic come — and— have—a—drink—with—me! —had—a—beau—sh—ful—time!!" At all of which, Scotty simply exploded with laughter, and asked facetiously:

"Say, Hendersin, what, in the name of heavens, *have* you been eating that has given you such an infernal indigestion?"

"Eating?" responded Hendersin, grinning stupidly, "hic—foo'ish—question—don't—know—hic— sh —what—you're—talking—about! Sh—come—along—Sh—Scotty, old chap, —and—I'll—sh—show—you—what—I've—been—eating—hic." And he made a

bee-line for the steps, leading the way downstairs to the little Reading-room, situated at the southwest end of the building.

As they reached the entrance, Hendersin stumbled and fell into a shapeless bundle on the floor, with such a thud that the glasses and bottles which lay on the old mahogany table clattered and came together in an outburst of apparent applause at the tableau-Hendersin!

For a moment Scotty was taken aback; for he stood stockstill before the doorway and gazed in perfect astonishment at the battery of jugs and bottles that fortified the table, intended only for the occupation of peaceful and instructive literature.

Then, after a while, he stepped into the room and lifted his friend, Hendersin to a chair. In the act of doing this, the entire party that had been "going it" on the lawn, tramped in noisily—each man bearing, gun-wise, a palm-branch over his shoulder, and singing lustily:

"When Johnny comes marching home!"

When the song had ceased, all eyes were



turned towards the almost unrecognizable figure crouched up in a chair in one corner of the room—wondering who the person could be! Frankinton, however, could stand the suspense no longer; so, weighted down with his burden of curiosity, he walked across the floor and laid his hand gently upon the drooping figure. Hendersin started at once, and raised his head slowly; then he stretched himself out to his full length and breadth, and yawned aloud! Finally, he threw himself back into a reclining attitude against the wall, grinned uglily at Frankinton, and began to sing in a hoarse and squeaky voice:

“We won’t go home till morning!

“We won’t go home till morning!”

when Frankinton yelled out to him:

“For God’s sake, Hendersin, shut up your darn racket, will you? Don’t you know that Mack and his wife are asleep in the room next door?—A fine looking specimen of humanity, you are, ain’t you?” said Frankinton, catching Hendersin by the shoulder, and shaking him admonishingly.

“None — of — your — darn — business!” shouted Hendersin; “to—hell—with—you, — Mack —and — his — wife — and — the whole bloomin’—crowd—of—you!” and then he started to sing the old refrain again:

“We won’t go home till morning!

“We won’t go home till morning!”

which he kept on repeating until he was almost out of breath. But he finally became less strenuous in his language—his object being, no doubt, to make atonement for his late vituperative outburst.

“Franky—old—boy,” he called out, somewhat disconnectedly, “pass—the—bottle—’round — to — everyone — and — let’s — have — a — drink — the — whole — of — us — together! And—say,—you—you—over—there —you—shaved—head—beggar!” he yelled out, pointing to Thatcher, “give—us—a lively—tune—on — your—*harmonica*—will you — and — I’ll — dance—a—good—old clog — for — the — company — by — way of—opening—up—the—ball!”

The bottle was passed, accordingly, and all hands supplied their glasses, and tossed

their *tragos* down after pledging each other heartily. Then, Thatcher adjusted his ample mouth to his harmonica, Sharp tickled his violin with bow and finger, while Hendersin, who had recovered somewhat from his late attack of *indigestion*, rose from his chair and stood up in the centre of the room, waiting for the first outburst of the music, with his arms akimbo! The instruments were, at last, awakened to measure: Sharp scraped his violin frantically; Thatcher held his own on his harmonica, while the boys beat a lively tattoo upon their knees by way of accompaniment. Then Hendersin started dancing wildly; but he had not well begun before every man rose up and formed a circle around the table. When everybody had fallen into line, Hudsins stepped forward and called out at the top of his voice:

“Now, boys, wait and take the time from me! One—Two—Three—*Musica!*—Let—’ergo!” and every foot began to sway simultaneously, till the flooring creaked beneath the burden of the dancers!

When the revel had reached its highest,

Wincherster held his hands aloft and sang out amidst the infernal uproar :

“Hoop-la!—Let ’er rip!—Go it, boys! Shake ’em up! All hands ’round!—Balance to your partners lively! Up and down the centre!—Left wheel!—keep it up, boys! Hi!—Hi!—Hi, there!” and a chorus of “Hi’s!” went up from every mouth as the dancers’ feet came down upon the floor, keeping time with the rhythm of the music! Finally, the dancing ceased, and all hands fell into their chairs, exhausted—panting and puffing heavily. Then there was a brief pause for breathing, after which Jimmy Ward pulled his watch out of his pocket and said :

“Boys, it’s just three minutes now to the hour of twelve, so let’s fill our glasses once more and drink the New Year in!”

The motion being seconded by Mike, and unanimously carried, the bottles were drained of their last intoxicating drop of liquor; then a moment’s silence ensued—a silence, haply, dedicated to thoughts of home and to loved-ones over the boundless waters! Suddenly, however, the clock upon



the mantel-shelf began to toll out mournfully the last hour of the senile year, which woke the boys from their reverie; and just as the stroke of twelve vibrated in an echo, every man clinked glasses and drank; then, hand-in-hand, sang "Auld Lang Syne" together.

When this deathless song had ceased, it was discovered that Scotty and Hendersin were missing from the crowd. No search was made for them, however, because it was deemed best to leave, at least, Hendersin alone to get over the effects of the night's hard dissipation. But the rest of the boys stayed on, bent each one, on keeping the ball a-rolling.

The first man to reopen the proceedings was Slim Frankinton. Drawing his chair close up to the table, he sat down and gazed enquiringly at the regiment of bottles lined off before him. Then he looked upon his empty glass forlornly, and picked the bottles up, one by one, and shook them vigorously to ascertain if there was anything left in them; finding nothing, he laid them back again upon the table, saying:

"Boys, I'm sorry to tell you there isn't a single drop of liquor left; but—'sh—don't give it away," he commanded, shrugging his shoulders and turning around to see if any one outside was listening. "It's all right," he resumed in a whisper, "no need to worry about a drink," he said, "for I've got the whole thing fixed, and if you chaps will only hold your tongues for a minute, I'll tell you all about it. I've got a scheme on hand that you couldn't beat to save your lives—Nay—Nay—Pauline!" And he turned around again looking for eavesdroppers. Convinced that all was well, he took the crowd in his confidence:

"Boys," he said, "it's just this: Scotty has a couple bottles of brandy hidden away behind that antediluvian trunk of his; he got them to-day from Johnny Ugg; so, if you'll all stand by me, I promise to get one of them before I'm two hours older—if I don't, then my name isn't what it is; furthermore, if I fail, I'll take you down to the *Howard House*, whenever you're ready, and set up the drinks for the whole outfit!"

All hands having promised their hearty co-operation, Frankinton disclosed his plan of campaign on Scotty's brandy, after which everybody proceeded to leave the room. But George Dranrab, fearing that Scotty was not yet well asleep, saw the wisdom of advising a little delay in the adventure.

"Dear boys," he called out in his usual endearing fashion, "I wouldn't risk it now if I were you. Better wait a few minutes more; it will be safer then. In the meanwhile, to pass the time away, let's get Mike to give us a story; so sit down, the whole of you, and make yourselves at home—where you ought to be," he remarked facetiously.

"George, old man!" exclaimed Walker, "it isn't a bad idea at all!" Then everybody called on Mike, who stepped forward demurely, and stood up for a while, fumbling with his watch-chain—his eyes elevated to the ceiling—waiting to catch the very first wave of inspiration. Growing impatient at waiting so long on Mike, Walker called out suddenly:

"Come along now, Mike; give us some-

thing—you can't get out of it!—no!—not on your life! Tell us about the night that Hudsin swam across the Lagoon, with all his clothing on, to get away from a policeman who had been chasing him.

But Mike blushed all over and said, "I really couldn't give you that one!" Then Frankinton got up and suggested:

"Well, perhaps, you'll tell us about the night that Walker stored the *Washington House*, and Hudsin came out on the balcony with his gun and popped away at him—yes, you remember, don't you? how Walker, after the first shot had been fired, ran and hid himself behind a cocoanut-tree, screaming out: 'For God's sake, Hudsin, stop your shooting!—it's I, Walker!'"

"No!—No!—No!" interrupted little Wardy, the Englishman, "that ain't what we want, at all! Let's 'ave instead, the bloomin' one 'bout you and Frankinton—don't you know? I mean that shooting affair," he said, addressing himself to Mike.

"Yes!—Yes!—Yes!" shrieked the whole crowd together.



"Wardy, old chap, you've just struck it right!" exclaimed Wincherster—"give it to us, Mike, it's a good one on you!"

"So, after exchanging a few consulting glances with Frankinton, who signalled over, "I don't mind if you do," Mike scraped his throat and began:

"Well, boys, I remember the night full well. I had just come in from work, tired as I could possibly be, and was preparing to go to bed, when Frankinton called out to me from his room, adjoining mine: " 'Mike!—Oh, Mike!—are you there, Mikey?' as he used to call me when he was in a good humor.

" 'Yes!—Yes!—Frankinton,' I replied; what, in the name of heavens, is the difficulty now?—Is George dead, at last?' I enquired.

" 'Dead?' he exclaimed interrogatively, and in a tone of voice that smacked of impossibility. 'Not on your life! Why, look here, Mike,' he answered, 'you couldn't kill him with a crowbar, if you tried to!'

" 'No! it wasn't that; what I wanted to

say to you, Mikey, was just this: it's the anniversary of my birthday, and I'd like you to come over and have a friendly drink with me in celebration of the occasion. I've got a bottle of good old *Jamaica* here I bought from Dewsberry this afternoon, that'll make your hair curl and your head swim all at the same time—labeled Special Brand; and, just fancy, twenty years old,' he commented invitingly.

" 'No thanks, Frankinton, it's too late now,' I replied; 'and what's more, I'm dead tired, and am going to turn in right away; for I have to be up early in the morning, to meet the *Colon* and assort her papers in time to despatch them to Panama by the first train leaving—so, good night, old chap, and don't bother me any more!'

" 'Tired the devil!' he retorted angrily, 'you've got to come and have a drink with me, Mike, or else there'll be trouble!'

"But I paid no attention to him whatever, and turned in to bed quickly.

"I had barely dimpled the pillow with my head, when I heard the sound of hurry-

ing footsteps in the hallway. Immediately, I jumped up and fastened every door and window, and stood in the centre of the room awaiting developments. I did not have to wait for very long, though; for, suddenly, I saw, under the crevice of the doorway, the glimmer of a sharp steel weapon, which the moonlight, streaming through the sashes, revealed to be the blade of a *machete*! This Frankinton swayed from one side of the door to the other in a vain attempt to force an opening. Finding his efforts futile, he called out to me, despairingly:

“ ‘Mike!—Oh, Mike!—are you coming, Mikey?—*uno nada mas!*’ he said, swinging the *machete* lively.

“Terrified, and with the view of appeasing Frankinton, I made answer:

“ ‘All right, Franky, old boy, go to your room now, and I’ll be there in a minute!’ With which assurance he went away quietly, leaving me, almost out of breath from fright, standing up and gazing blankly around the room, the while I listened to the

sound of his receding footsteps in the hallway.

“As soon as I knew he had reached his apartment, I got into bed and cuddled up under the counterpane, hoping that Frankinton had forgotten all about the promise I had made him; when lo! he began with his threat again:

“ ‘Mike!’ he shouted, ‘you’d better quit your fooling—see? and come at once, for I ain’t waiting any longer on you—*sabe!* In fact, I’m going to give you just three more calls, Mike, and if you’re not on the way by that time, why then, you can look out for squalls, I tell you; for, by the Holy Moses, I’ll shoot for sure!’ Then he immediately started to put his threat into execution.

“ ‘Mike,’ he began, are you coming?—*uno!*’

“No answer.

“ ‘Mike,’ for the second time, are you coming?—*dos!*’

“Still no answer.

“ ‘Mike,’ he continued, deliberately and



slowly, 'for the third—and—last—time, Mike, are you coming?—*tres!*'

"But never an answer did he get from me. And so, exasperated over my unyielding silence, he called out quickly:

" 'Well, then, here she goes, Mike!' and the last word had scarcely escaped utterance when, lo! there was a terrible report, and a flash like lightning; then a bullet hissed by me, just an inch or so above the spot where I lay in bed dozing.

"Quickly, I started as from some horrible nightmare, and was on my feet in a second—scared to death, and shaking like a jellyfish! In fact, it was only long after I had recovered from the shock, that I began to realize just what had happened, and the narrow escape that I had had. Frankinton, too; for he called out to me somewhat nervously:

" 'For God's sake, Mike, are you hurt at all, old chap?—talk out, will you? for the thing has given me the ague!'

"Then, I thought I heard him shiver—'br—r—r—!' but I gave him no answer, thinking that the addition of a little suspense to

his anxiety, would serve him well as a lesson for the future. When I felt that I had kept him waiting long enough for an answer, I relented, and broke the silence.

“ ‘I’m all right, Franky,’ I said, ‘and alive and kicking; but that isn’t all of it—no! not by a jug full! I’ve had a narrow escape, I can tell you, and I want to say this much, Frankinton, I’m pretty mad with you for what you’ve just done! I cannot, for the *life of me*, understand what got it into your head to commit so rash an act. Anyhow, we’ll drop the matter for the present, for I’m tired, and am going to bed at once; but to-morrow you’ll hear further from me on the subject.’

“This, no doubt, was taken by Frankinton in the spirit of a threat; and I fancy, too, that he must have pictured himself, valise in hand, boarding the next outgoing steamer for New York—at least, I judged so by the tremor in his voice when he answered:

“ ‘Mike, old chap, now look here; there’s no use in your getting riled at all! I really didn’t mean to do it—so help me God, I

didn't, Mike! And I'll take my solemn oath to it, that I never even knew the gun was loaded, till the darn thing went off on me suddenly! Will you believe me, Mike, and give me your word that you'll say nothing of this affair to the Old Man to-morrow?"

"Feeling convinced that he was really in earnest, and perfectly innocent of any attempt on my life, I made him the promise, and both of us turned in to our respective beds—Frankinton, haply, resolving to fool no more with firearms, and I, well—wondering over the miraculous escape that I had had."

It was just 1 o'clock of New Year's morning when Mike had finished his story, at the close of which the Reading-room re-echoed with a wild burst of laughter and applause, that must have awakened the entire neighborhood! Then there began the stamping of feet, which was simply uproarious; but when the din had reached to a deafening point, Frankinton, always the man of emergency, rose to the present occasion, held his hands aloft, and, waving them to and fro

above his sparsely-covered head, demanded silence at the top of his wee small voice—

“There! — There! — There!” he said, “that’s enough of your racket now, boys! Quit your noise, I say, for it’s late, and the whole neighborhood will be reporting us to-morrow to the *Old Man*; and then some of us may get it *in the neck*! Do you all know what time it is now?” he asked, looking down gravely on his watch, which he held in his hand, as he said in answer to his own question:

“Well, it’s about time to get a move on us! I am feeling pretty darn dry, I can tell you, and I guess you must all be about in the same condition as I am; so, come along now,” he commanded impatiently, as he turned around and motioned the crowd to the doorway; he taking the lead outside, while the rest of the boys followed him, until they were all in Hudsin’s room, where it had been arranged to carry out the plan of capturing the bottle of Scotty’s brandy.



## III.

Hudsin's room was situated at the north-east end of the building, which fronted the palm-rimmed seashore. It was, of course, the best furnished apartment in the premises because, well—it was the Commissary's.

In this room, that early New Year's morning, sat Fred Hudsin, Jimmy Ward, George Dranrab, Slim Frankinton, Will Wincherster, John Guthrie, Mike Devlante, A. Sharp, Alex Walker and Tom Thatcher, all of them speaking in subdued voices.

After a short while, there was suppressed laughter among the crowd; and every eye was turned on Frankinton when he got up from his chair and walked across the floor to the little marble-top wash-stand, that stood in one corner of the bedroom. When he reached the wash-stand, he rolled up his

shirt-sleeves, as far back as they could go, and busied himself as he said humorously:

“Gentlemen of the Jury, we’ll now proceed with the affairs of this Convention;” saying which he picked up a piece of sweet-soap, placed it into a basin, threw some water over it, and began stirring the soap around until it had dissolved itself into thick white suds, that foamed and bubbled. During this strange performance, the boys gazed curiously at Frankinton, and a far-away look illumined every man’s eye—a look, well, in which, it seemed, there reflected the memory of long-dead days, associated with white clay pipes, that spouted rainbow-colored bubbles, which went up to heaven and burst in the clear-blue skies of happy childhood!

But a sudden rap at the door, which broke the spell of this delightful reverie, sent the boys into dire confusion, while Frankinton quickly picked up the basin, which contained the soap-suds that he had just been churning, and, lying flat upon his stomach on the floor, hid it under the bed

as far back as his slender hand could reach; then everybody began to put on a borrowed-look of angelic goodness.

When everything was quiet, Hudsin rose and opened the door; when, to his great surprise, dear old Billy Thomson and Willie Mackenzie stood before him—the one holding up the frame of the doorway and smiling good-naturedly upon the crowd inside; the other sour of countenance and ready to explode with vituperation!

Billy Thomson was the first to break the silence:

“Young gentlemen—young gentlemen,” he said, with much deliberation, “don’t you think you’ve all had enough of this thing already?”

“Enough?” interrupted Mackenzie, gruffly; “darn it, I should say they have had! Why, hang it! my wife and I haven’t had a blessed wink of sleep during the livelong night, on account of the disgraceful racket downstairs. Have you chaps thought for a moment what the *Old Man* would say if this scandalous affair was ever brought to

his notice? There'd be trouble, I can tell you! I guess," he continued more moderately, "you've all forgotten the night that he threatened, in the presence of you all in the Reading-room down-stairs, to shut up the *Washington House* if you fellows didn't behave different to what you were doing then——"

"Mack!" interrupted Hudsin, "for heaven's sake, quit your lecturing now, and come in just for a minute, won't you?—you, too, Mr. Thomson; for there's something doing: Frankinton has a small bet on hand which he wants to settle immediately. If he loses, he's to blow us off at the *Howard House* this evening; and just fancy, Old Pike is to make the cocktails for us. Poor fellow! What a time he'll have shaking 'em up with that queer-shaped hand of his! Anyhow, you must come in and see the fun; we're going to work a little game on." Here Hudsin broke off abruptly, and stood up between Thomson and Mackenzie, with a hand laid upon each one's shoulder as he whispered to both of



them something that brought a smile upon their faces and induced them to join the happy gathering.

As soon as all hands were settled in their seats, Frankinton resumed his soap-suds operations, while Hudsin began undressing himself and getting into his silk pajamas. His pajamas on, Hudsin jumped into bed with such a fierce bound that the spring mattress vibrated beneath him for some seconds afterwards; a performance which, of course, created no little amusement among the party, and sent the boys into a fit of laughter.

"Hi! there!" shouted Frankinton; "that's enough of your stupid giggling, now! If you don't stop this foolish laughing, we'll be up a gum-tree just as sure as you live!" With this admonition he clenched his right hand tightly and held it high up in the air, with which command he finally brought the boys to order.

Silence reigning in the room, Frankinton immediately proceeded to pose Hudsin in the bed for the occasion of the onslaught

on Scotty's brandy. The adjustment over, it was the most comical sight that one could ever imagine. There was Hudsin, lying stretched out at full length upon the bed, under a snow-white counterpane, with a stern, rigid, look upon his countenance that betrayed the determination, come what might, to intercept the smile that dared to threaten the long-contemplated scheme with ruin!

At the side of the bed stood George Dranrab, judge-serious, holding the basin of soap-suds, awaiting the time for action. At this particular juncture, the meeting rose to its highest pitch of excitement, and speculations began to run wild as to the ultimate outcome of a crazy undertaking! Frankinton, however, stood to his gun like a man, and Hudsin, too, to the disagreeable and unsavory part which he was playing in the entire affair.

When everything was ready, Frankinton gave his last instructions to Hudsin, then turned to Dranrab and said:

“Remember now, *Dear George,*” which

was the name that Dranrab always went by, "you know exactly what to do! For God's sake, don't make a mess of the thing! If you do, well, my name will be Dennis, whatever that may mean! Listen carefully now, and take it all in: when you hear us coming, fill up Hudsin's mouth with the suds, and leave the balance to the patient."

Saying which, he took his way out quietly, and went in the direction of Scotty's room that was situated on the other side of the building. Scotty was fast asleep at the time; but as the first rap sounded on his door, he jumped up, and, in his usual rough style demanded at the top of his voice:

"Who the devil is there? and what in h—— do you want of me at this early hour of the morning?"

"Hush—hush—hush, Scotty; for the Lord's sake, hush; don't make such a fearful noise, old chap—the shock might kill him!—it's I, Frankinton."

"Well, what is the matter now?" thundered Scotty. "I really don't understand

you!—"The shock might kill him?" Why don't you talk out plainly?—kill whom?—By God, I begin to think you've got 'em bad this time, Frankinton! Go on with you, and get to bed now!—A nice shine that you've all kicked up downstairs—isn't it? Glad I wasn't in the crowd!"

"That's all right, Scotty; it doesn't cut any figure at all whether you were there or not; I came here only to—to—to—tell—you—" said Frankinton, smothering a great lump of laughter with the tail-end of his pajama jacket—

"Darn it!" interrupted Scotty, "why don't you spit it out quickly?—to tell me *what?*"

"To tell you, Scotty, that Hudsin has just been taken in pretty sick, and to ask if you wouldn't come over and see if you can do anything for him. The poor fellow is threatened with a fit, it seems; for his eyes are wild, and his face is as red as it can be!"

"You don't say!" exclaimed Scotty, excitedly opening the door and admitting Frankinton.

"That's just what I do, Scotty; so hurry



up and come; for there isn't a moment to lose!"

After a very trifling delay, hunting for his slippers, which he finally found under the furthest part of the bed, where we're sure to find our slippers always, Scotty rushed out of his room, Frankinton following him closely.

IV.

The first thing that attracted Scotty's attention as he entered Hudsin's room, was the figure that lay stretched out on the bed supinely. For a moment, Scotty stood up silent and aghast; then, with a look of earnest solicitude, that multiplied the wrinkles on his lineaments, he bent down enquiringly over Hudsin, when his eyes met the wild and glassy stare of the patient's.

Observing, at once, that Hudsin was foaming at his mouth, copiously, Scotty became alarmed, and turned around and exclaimed:

"Gracious goodness, boys! the fellow is in a fit—sure! Look at him!—his eyes are almost bursting from their sockets; and see!—he's got another attack again!—Run for the doctor!—somebody!—anybody!" he yelled excitedly; and then he began to navigate the full length and breadth of the bed-

room—confused and lost as to what to do for the patient in the meantime! Regaining his equilibrium, he resumed calmly:

“For God’s sake, Frankinton, have you nothing at all in the house to give the poor chap to drink? If you have, why—d— it! trot it out quickly, and don’t leave the man suffering here like this for the want of something to revive him!”

This little speech from Scotty had wound the crowd up almost to a bursting tension; but Slim Frankinton, good general as he was always, stepped forward and answered promptly:

“Scotty, old chap, I’m sorry to tell you there isn’t a drop of anything around here; but say,” he added naively, “perhaps *you* have, and wouldn’t mind coming to the rescue like a good fellow.”

Here, Frankinton had driven the wedge right home—scoring one on Scotty; for the appeal had come just when a man’s existence, as Scotty believed at the time, hung in the balance of his decision, on which all

hands waited with keen and breathless anxiety!

But, in the crucial moment, the better part of Scotty soon prevailed, as it will always with men of his stamp and calibre! For he immediately raised his head, that had been bent down in deep deliberation, mopped the glistening beads of perspiration off his forehead, then, after gazing thoughtfully around, dashed out of the room *a la* spread-eagle, and dashed back again—out of breath, and bearing under his left arm a bottle of brandy, from which the cork had not yet been extracted.

Thrusting the bottle into Frankinton's hand, he exclaimed, somewhat excitedly:

“Here you are, Franky, old boy; open it quickly and give him a good, stiff slug while I run and call the doctor!”

And off he went like a shot, for Hitchcock, who lived in one of the small bungalows that stood then where the more imposing residence of the General Superintendent is now standing.

When the last sound of his footsteps had



died into the distance, there was a great laugh on Scotty, during which Hudsins got up, closed the door securely, rinsed his mouth out, and afterwards began to rehabilitate himself.

Flushed with triumph, Frankinton turned to Hudsins, who had won his laurels, too, in the heroic part he had played in the whole affair, and commanded him to open the bottle and pass the contents 'round to everybody. Then, when all the glasses were charged, Hudsins lifted his, and, with an air of self-satisfaction lighting up his countenance, his lips curled into a pleasant smile, said :

“Well, boys, I guess it's about time now we did have something to brace us up a bit! —here's to Scotty!”

Then every man tossed his *trago* down, while “Scotty!” — “Scotty!” — “Scotty!” rent the quiet of the New Year morning and died away into an echo.

## V.

Scotty was not aware of the fact, however, that Frankinton had called on Hitchcock the day before, and, confiding to him the secret of his contemplated intrigue, had solicited his medical co-operation—whereupon the good-natured doctor had dismissed him, saying :

“It’s all right, Franky; go ahead and count on me whenever you’re ready; and you can just bet your sweet life that I’ll be there on time to put the finishing touches to the job. Darn my soul if I don’t think it’ll be a pretty good lesson for Scotty in the future!”

Ignorant of all this, Scotty went his way that early New Year morning in search of the doctor, whom he did not find at his bungalow, however. He had been called out, as the negro inside informed him, to attend to Mrs. Smith, the dear old soul of

where the revel had subsided into that calm which generally follows a storm.

Here we find Frankinton looking serious, and asking in a nervous sort of voice:

“But, say, boys, what, in the name of heavens, are we going to say to Scotty about this thing when he returns?—he’ll surely want to know what has become of the balance of his brandy; and, *certainly*, we’ll have to tell him something—anything, until he finds out for himself the real truth of the story. So, come now, get your heads together and try your best to work out some good, plausible yarn before he pounces in upon us, which he is liable to do at any minute now——”

“The devil!” shouted Hudsin, stepping forward and looking defiant, “what in the world are you all beginning to lose your nerves about?—give *me* the empty bottle,” he demanded, taking the same from Frankinton and hiding it under one of the pillows on the bed, saying: “The doctor and I will attend to *that* part of the business when the proper time arrives.

Here, the sound of approaching footsteps on the staircase interrupted the speaker suddenly, and a general stampede ensued: With all his clothing on, Hudsins sprang into bed, drew the counterpane quickly over him as far up to his neck as it could go, turned his face towards the wall, and "made believe" that he was sleeping.

When everything and everybody had settled down quietly, Frankinton lowered the light a bit, then opened the door and admitted Scotty, who was accompanied by the doctor.

"Well!" growled Hitchcock before he had even entered the room, "what's the trouble now?—calling a man so early in the morning! Darn it! if you chaps would only quit taking that vile stuff you drink any and everywhere you go down town, you wouldn't get the *jim-jams* as often, I'll bet you!"

"How is Hudsins?" he asked abruptly.

"Sleeping quietly," responded Frankinton.

"Any more fits?"



"No!" was the laconic reply from Frankinton.

"That's good!" said Hitchcock, as he walked in and took a seat alongside of the bed on which Hudsin was lying; shortly after doing which he tested the pseudo-patient's pulse, looking down upon his watch gravely.

During this serio-comic performance, however, Hudsin remained perfectly imperturbable, and the boys held their breath for all they were worth, fearing the result of an outburst of pent-up laughter! Finally, Hitchcock broke the terrible silence of the moment——

"He's resting calmly now, and his pulse is fairly regular," he said without a single twitch of his countenance; then he resumed shortly:

"He'll be all right again as soon as he wakes up."

"But, say, Doc', what do you think gave him those awful fits?" enquired Scotty nervously.

"*What* do I think gave him those awful

fits?" repeated the doctor satirically; "well, now, look here, Scotty, if you'd only put the thing the other way 'round, old chap, prefixing your question with 'Who' instead of 'What,' I should answer, without the slightest hesitation that—you are responsible for them all!" at which mysterious response Scotty was startled, and he fell back a step or two—his face as livid as a ghost's!

"I?" was his laconic rejoinder. "I'm afraid, Doc', I do not catch on to you exactly! what the devil could *I* have to do with Hudsin's fits, will you tell me?"

"Lots!" exclaimed the doctor, shoving his hand under a pillow and withdrawing it again quickly—saying as he did so:

"And here's a proof of it!—do you recognize this?" asked Hitchcock, holding up an empty bottle to Scotty, and tapping upon it with the ringed third finger of his right hand; "this," he said, "contained the stuff that has been the sole cause of Hudsin's trouble!" But Scotty did not understand, nor yet did he try to; for the moment, he remembered only his precious brandy, against

the loss of which he protested good-humor-  
edly.

“Recognize,” he answered, “a darn looking wreck of a thing like that, without a drop of liquor left into it?—recognize hell!—no, sir, not by a d— sight!”

“Hush your racket there, will you, Scotty?” interposed Frankinton calmly. “Hang it,” he continued, “ain’t you got any better sense than that—making such a noise when the doctor has just given a hypodermic of morphine to Hudsin, who must be kept perfectly quiet?”

With which reproof Scotty was silenced immediately! For, strange to say, from the very beginning of the farce to the present stage of the performance, the possibility of dissemblance had never once occurred to Scotty. Rather to the contrary: everything appeared too natural, as he thought, for him to have looked upon the whole affair in the light of a huge practical joke only. There was the doctor’s visit, for instance, and then the hypodermic of morphine, both of which, after revolving them

carefully over in his mind, he accepted as ample evidence that there was no deception underlying the Hudsins-case at all; and so, as a natural consequence, suspicion lay dormant within him.

What, of course puzzled Scotty immensely was Hitchcock's charge against him; and he wondered upon what ground the doctor could have made the imputation. Could there have been anything, he imagined, in the quality of the liquor—which, by the way, he had since discovered was none of the best—that had brought about such serious results to Hudsins? But then, he dismissed the thought immediately, seeing that the effect had not been general. Nevertheless, bewildered over the matter, he stood up silent for a moment, gazing upon the floor, and looking thoughtful.

By this time, however, Hudsins had reached the limit of his endurance, and could stand the strain no longer; so, taking advantage of Scotty's preoccupation, he turned, almost imperceptibly, over in the bed and nudged the doctor with his elbow.



Hitchcock took the hint at once, and made a sign to Frankinton; soon after which the lamp, that had been burning dimly on the table, went out suddenly and left all hands in total darkness!

When the lamp had again been lighted, there appeared a perfect revelation before Scotty! *There* was Hudsin, sitting up at the edge of the bed, his feet upon the floor, his elbows resting on his knees, his hands supporting his forehead. After a while, he raised his head up slowly, made grimaces at the crowd, and burst out laughing—belching forth a whole mouthful of soap-suds and besmearing everybody! Then it was that the whole thing dawned, at last, on Scotty, who, accepting the joke with a sense of good humor, joined in the laughter, that soon became general, and shortly after turned to Hitchcock and exclaimed:

“Je-rusalem!”—with an accent on the first syllable—“is that the man who had a fit a moment ago, Doc’? If it is, well, darn my soul, he did the thing to the letter! And

as for you and Frankinton, Doc', well! well! well! le' me tell you this right here now; you're the bossiest pair of liars I *ever* have come across! But it's all right, boys," he said, turning around and addressing himself to the crowd, "I own up to it, frankly, that you've caught me this time; but say—don't make any mistake about it—not as badly as you all might think you have! Where's the empty bottle? Give it to me," he demanded abruptly, taking it from Frankinton and examining the label. The scrutiny over, he laid the bottle down upon the table, stroked his hair, and exclaimed suggestively:

"For heaven's sake!—do you chaps know what you've all been drinking?—Guess!" In answer to which every man raised his left hand to his mouth, held his stomach up with the right one, and shouted all together:

"What?"

"Hold on now, boys; you needn't get so excited over nothing; just keep cool for a minute, and I'll tell you 'What,'" re-

sponded Scotty. "I've made a mistake," he said.

"Made a mistake?" interrupted the crowd, alarmingly.

"Yes!—you see it was just like this; there were two bottles behind my trunk at the time; but in the hurry of the moment I, unfortunately, picked up the wrong one and handed it to Frankinton. That one, I regret to tell you, contained German rot-gut imitation brandy I had purchased to give the butcher of the *Crescent City*, in return for a keg of 'blue points' he had brought for me from New York; the other bottle, which I bought for my own personal delectation, is behind my trunk now." With which announcement the boys were simply astounded; but Frankinton, who had determined within himself, come what may, not to be outwitted by Scotty, turned quickly around and winked at Hudsin one of those deep-meaning winks of his in which there was the reflection of further plot and conspiracy! Hudsin, who was standing at the doorway at the moment, interpreting the







The Old Washington House.

signal immediately, left the crowd unnoticed and went into Scotty's room on tip-toe, and took the other bottle of brandy away and hid it in his own apartment.

When Scotty returned to his room again he discovered that the other bottle had vanished also; but never a word, afterwards, did he say to the boys in connection with the incident, in which his bluff about the *Crescent City* bottle had not worked out at all, and in which he had been completely vanquished.



AN UNHEEDED WARNING



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## An Unheeded Warning.

(A Story of the Isthmus of Panama)

(Period, 1904)

The news had spread like wild-fire: Morgan had been, at last, defeated—Nicaragua was *nowhere* her vaunted route had sunk forever into the wild womb of uncreated undertakings! Panama was *on top*; for the Hay-Bunauvarilla Treaty, the outcome of a well planned and heroically executed Secession, had passed the United States Senate by a vote of Sixty-six to Fourteen! Panamanians were jubilant over the consummation of their long-cherished dream; and Colon and Panama had given themselves up to Chinese fire-crackers, music and bunting, in celebration of the dawn of a new Isthmian era. Colombia was crestfallen at the loss of the gem of her possessions!

New York was all excitement too. On the L's and on the trolley-cars, Panama was rampant; for people, young and old, discussed the news over their morning papers, in which some readers had become so engrossed that they were carried blocks away from the stations at which they had intended to get off.

Wall Street was rife with speculations anent the ten million dollars which the United States Government had agreed to pay the Republic of Panama for the right to construct a Canal through its territory; and to some brokers the occasion seemed, no doubt, a possible opportunity for a 'spec'.

The New York newsboys were simply intolerable with their unearthly shrieks that rent the air:

"Herald! — Sun! — Journal! — World! — Times!

"Latest news—*Der* Panama Canal is sold! Uncle Sam's got it, dead sure, this time— buy a paper, sir?" And they'd thrust a paper in your face just when you were hur-

rying to catch an L-express or a crowded surface trolley-car.

“Sixty-Six to Fourteen had become world-wide ubiquitous. In New York City the news was known in every quarter—even along the docks; for in a ferry station, in the neighborhood of West 27th Street two men sat down discussing Panama over the morning paper. The two were James Lowley and Dick Scanton; the latter having been down to Pier 57, North River, to meet the steamer which had just arrived from Colon, to get some news of the Isthmus.

To Panama, Lowley was a stranger; to Scanton not; for he had been there in the palmy days of '81-87; but left after the crash of '88 which ruined so many! Scanton, however, had been one of Fortune's favorites, for he had taken away with him sufficient money to last a thrifty disposition, such as his, for the balance of his life. Now, it was just sixteen years since he had retired from the Isthmus; yet many and many was the day he had felt the potent charm of the Chagres water, and, so, longed



to return to the old haunts again—to the land of palms and ravishing sunsets! Owing to increased years and to the impaired condition of his health, the longing never materialized; but, let it be said, and to his credit, that his interest in the Isthmus endured all through the entire period of his absence. He, therefore, naturally, felt a deep thrill of gratification rise up in his heart when the glad tidings reached him that dear old Panama had triumphed at last.

Lowley was still occupied reading his paper when a tall, slim, handsome young fellow stepped up and interrupted him—

“Hello there!” he called out in a voice that smacked of long acquaintanceship, “What’s that you’re reading about that, apparently, interests you chaps so much?” he asked, eagerly; and “The Panama Canal,” was Lowley’s quick response.

“Tell me all about it!” exclaimed Charlie Willinger, the new-comer, “for I might take it in my head to go to the Isthmus and try my luck there. Things here,” he continued,

“have gone mighty hard with me lately: I’ve been out of a job for months now, and the little money which I had put aside for the ‘rainy day’ in the proverb, is almost finished—in fact I don’t know what I shall do if something does not turn up in a hurry.” In answer to which Lowley thrust into Willinger’s hand the morning paper he had been reading, saying:

“There you are, Charlie, read it for yourself”; which he did too and to his heart’s content; for when he gave the paper back to Lowley, you could have seen a gleam of hopeful light shining in his eyes, and a smile all over his countenance as he remarked:

“Well, Jim, here’s a chance for us at last! Don’t lose the opportunity; let’s make up our minds to go to the Isthmus; we’re both doing nothing at present, and you really don’t know what might be our luck that side. And, say, I tell you what; I’ll make this deal with you, old fellow: the one that gets a job first will look out for the other until he is fixed also. Come now, what do

you think of the scheme? Is it a go or not?—come, now, answer quickly!"

Here, Dick Scanton, who had, so far, proved himself to be a pretty good listener, had evidently decided that the time had now come for him to cease playing audience, and to put in a word or two; for, all of a sudden, he threw himself back into his chair, crossed his legs serenely, stuck his thumbs through the armholes of his waistcoat, and thus unburdened himself:

"Tut—tut—tut, man!" he exclaimed, with a note of deep astonishment in his voice, "Go to the Isthmus now," he said, "when nothing at all is doing?—the Treaty only ratified a few hours ago!—madness, boys! simply madness on the part of both of you to entertain such a thought just at this particular moment—I guess you must be off your *cabes!* both of you! I should think the most sensible way to go about this thing at all, would be to wait till Uncle Sam commences digging in real, true earnest; but to go now, to my mind, is almost out of the question. See here, Charlie, my

boy, I have been to the Isthmus, and I know just what I'm talking about—was there in the early rush of French Canal days, when people flocked to Colon to look for employment, and were compelled, soon after, to return to their respective homes, because they saw, at once, that they had come too soon.”

After this somewhat lengthy sermon, in every word of which there was truth and wisdom, Scanton rose from his seat, looked at both men with that serious air which generally characterizes the man who gives advice to others, and then resumed to the finish :

“Now, boys,” he said, “I've got to leave you ; don't, for heaven's sake, make any mistake about this thing at all. Think it over well before acting definitely. In the meantime, however, should you need any further advice from me, come to my room, both of you, whenever you think it necessary” ; saying which, Scanton left his two friends alone to wind up the Panama discussion, which was resumed with increased vigor



and interest. The first one to reopen the conversation was James Lowley :

“Charlie,” he said, timorously, “it’s all very well and good for you to talk about going to the Isthmus; but, tell me, will you, where’s the money to come from to pay our way to Colon? It costs just thirty dollars to get there—steerage accommodations at that; and while it’s very true that I could get the ‘dough’ from Scanton, I must confess that I would not like to ask any favors of——”

“Neither would I!” interrupted Willinger; “but, say, what’s the matter with us working our way down? The voyage, as you know, is only seven days run, and I certainly see no reason why we could not rough it for that short while; so, come on, now; talk quickly and let me know what you decide, for this is Saturday, and the boat sails for Colon on Tuesday afternoon, which gives us, as you see plainly, very little time for thinking. If you agree to it, we’ll go to the steamer on Monday morning and state our case to the captain”; to which,

however, Lowley remained perfectly silent for a moment: Willinger, he thought, was too importunate; and in fact, the whole proposition was all too sudden for him.

And so, stroking his hair, Lowley posed in an attitude of deep contemplation; and if one could only have read his thoughts then, they would, possibly, have found them associated with the picture of a seasick amateur sailor, or, haply, with that of an awkward waiter staggering around a ship's table! In this frame of mind, he finally made answer:

“Charlie, before I give you a definite reply, let's call on Scanton—to-morrow, say—and get his promised and last advice on this momentous affair”; and the suggestion being agreed upon, Willinger and Lowley walked out of the ferry-station together—the one with new hopes burning within him; the other, sceptical of the future.

## II.

Charles Willinger, who was born in New York, was a young man about twenty-nine years old; lean and lanky and delicately built, with deep-set pale blue eyes, within whose dreamy depths you could have seen the light of true, stern, honest manliness. Firm of character, and possessing a powerful will of his own, whenever Willinger took a notion into his head, that was the end of it: there was no changing his mind at all and so, with him, the Panama trip was a settled question altogether.

James Lowley was thirty-six years of age heavily set and short in stature, with dark brown eyes and a fair complexion. Physically, he was the stronger man of the two, but, by far, the lesser in grit and character. Educated liberally in the public schools of the cities in which they were born, Willinger and Lowley had gathered enough

good sense to enable them to earn a decent livelihood for themselves wherever they went; but through gambling on the part of one and drink on the other, hard luck had followed them both lately; and now that reformation had come to them at last, Willinger, like the drowning man in the old proverb, looked on Panama as the "straw" to catch at.

Lowley was a Western man; but he had lived in New York City for the past ten years, for five of which he and Willinger had been inseparable comrades. During the other five years Willinger resided in Nebraska, where he met an only sister of Lowley's—a tall, handsome girl of sixteen summers—and fell in love with her; but after a very short engagement, Mabel, for some reason or other, unknown to all but herself, gave him the *cut*, which broke his heart until, in the utter despair of the moment, he "chucked his job" and took the first train out for New York City. Yet, with it all, he bore up patiently, and kept the secret of his love so well locked up within him, that not



even his best friend had ever been taken into his confidence. The object of his love and he alone, were the only ones that knew about it all; well, and perhaps, too, the little golden charm that hung around his neck, secreted under his singlet,—the locket, and the picture inside, which Mabel had given to him before their lovebonds had been severed.

## III.

It was Sunday morning. In a modestly furnished room in a small apartment house, situated in the Bronx, New York City, Dick Scanton, alone and pensive, sat looking over some "curios" which he had brought with him from the Isthmus of Panama long years ago. The collection was a weird and unique one, consisting of stuffed birds of rich, rare plumage, stuffed *iguanas*, ancient rosaries, carved and painted *tutumas*, primitive jewelry made by the San Blas Indians, pottery of every description, a varied assortment of sea-shells, many-shaped and tinted, and, last of all, a bottle containing some pure white liquid stuff that might have been water.

Picking up this bottle, which, it appears, had engaged the greater part of his attention, Scanton gazed at it with a deep, cunning look from the corner of his left eye, and thus soliloquized:

“Well, yes, I’ve changed my mind altogether. I’ll advise them to go: nothing like seeing for oneself. Lowley, it is true, did not seem inclined to take the trip when we talked the matter over yesterday; but if the beggar shows any signs of fear when we again resume the subject, why, then,” he said, “you,” addressing himself to the bottle, which he still held in his hand, “will likely settle the question without any further argument.” With this, he returned the bottle on the table, and as he did so, an impatient rap was sounded upon the door.

The first idea that struck him when he heard the alarm was, that he had been overheard; and he, therefore, hesitated for a moment before he would respond to the summons; but he finally opened the door, and as he did so Charles Willinger stood before him.

“Good morning, Scanton,” he said; “how are you? I’ve come, according to arrangement, to hear your final views about this Panama trip of ours; but I might just as well tell you from now, that no matter what

may be your opinion on the subject, *I* have fully made up my mind to go. Your advice, therefore, can only affect Lowley, who, by the way, is still against the movement; but, as I have stated before, that will cut no figure with me at all;" saying which, Willinger turned around and drew a chair close up to the table, on which the strange "curios" were lined off in exhibition-array.

He had no sooner sat down than he began to examine everything carefully—asking a thousand questions about each article in its turn; but when he came to the *bottle*, his curiosity reached the climax! Picking it up, he looked at it with the gravest scrutiny, turned it upside down several times, shook it vigorously, then asked, with the most solemn unction:

"For heaven's sake, Scanton, tell me, what, in the world, does this here bottle contain?" But before the question was answered another knock was heard at the door, through which, on being opened, Lowley dashed into the room, panting—almost out of breath,



Willinger saw at once that something unexpected had happened, and so he exclaimed outright:

“Holy Gee, Lowley!—what, in the devil, is the matter with you now? Why, bless my soul, you’re as pale as a ghost! Has anything gone wrong since I saw you last? Or perhaps your present excitement is due mainly to your having come in suddenly for a legacy, and are here now,” he added jocularly, “to tell us of your good fortune”; in reply to which Lowley pulled a newspaper from his pocket, and, pointing to an article headed, in great big type, WARNING, said nervously: “There you are, my good fellow—read *that!*”. And this is what the paper said:

“People here and abroad are hereby warned against going to the Isthmus of Panama to seek positions at this particular juncture; for work in real true earnest has not yet begun on the Canal; preliminary surveys, sanitation and organization are the principal features of work engaging attention to-day. It might also be stated that labor is plentiful, with little or no demand. In the higher grades of employment, nothing is offering; trade is dull, and the Merchants are crying out bitterly;

the time, therefore, has not yet come to go to the Isthmus, and we advise people to stay where they are until conditions are settled, due and timely notice of which will be given to our readers.

All of this Willinger read without a ruffle on his countenance; then he quickly turned to Lowley and remarked reprovingly:

“Jim, old chap, it takes mighty little to scare *you*, I see; why, you’re shaking like a jelly-fish! Got the Chagres fever already? You certainly don’t mean to tell me that you take any stock in that blood and thunder newspaper talk, do you? Nonsense, man! I’m really surprised at you! Anyhow, your not going will cut no figure with me, I can tell you; for sure as you stand there, *I* have made up my mind to go, come what may!”

For a moment Lowley was full of dumb astonishment at what he considered to be the rash determination of Willinger, for whom he felt such keen anxiety that cold beads of perspiration rolled down his forehead—bead after bead; but, finally, he braced himself up and said with a nervous tremor in his voice:

“Charlie, I’m not exactly afraid to go; but that article which you’ve just read gives good reason enough why we should not start for the Isthmus now. It would be all very well and good,” he continued, by way of emphasizing the gravity of the situation, “were we both sure of striking something as soon as we got there; but you see there is no certainty about that, and there’s just where the entire difficulty lies! Nineteen hundred and seventy miles is a long way to go, my good fellow, in search of work and then find nothing but disappointment. No, sir! New York City is a good enough place for me just at this present moment; I’m in no hurry; the Isthmus can wait a bit yet for me, Charlie; so count me out of your mad scheme, for I cannot call it anything else. Why, hang it,” continued Lowley, who by this had been wound up to a pitch of nervous excitement on the subject, “don’t you remember what Scanton told us the other day about *Monkey Hill*, and how they used to dump the dead there when there was no money to pay for a decent Christian burial?

Gee!" he exclaimed with a shudder, and a cold feeling running all down his back, "I fancy I see that horrible black coffin now before me with its incongruous inscription on top, '*Pobre Solemnidad.*'"

Here, Scanton, who had been listening patiently, unable to restrain himself any longer, went off into a loud peal of laughter that shook his very frame. Then, by way of prefacing what he had resolved in his mind to say, he stretched himself out to his full length, drew his waistcoat down, peered into the troubled depths of Lowley's eyes, and, gazing upon the bottle that lay upon the table among the "curios," said in a serious tone of voice:

"Jim, old boy, don't worry about that coffin story any longer; those will be things of the past, you bet, as soon as Uncle Sam gets a-hold of things on the Isthmus; but, say, that isn't your real trouble; what's the matter with you is this: you need a tonic badly"; and with this Scanton walked across the floor to a little cupboard that stood in one corner of the room, and took



from it a small flask of good old rye, which he held up to his company saying:

"Now, boys, come along; draw your chairs closer to the table and have *one* with me! nothing like a good, stiff drop, I tell you, when a man is not feeling just up to the mark"; and as he said so, he passed the flask around until the three glasses glowed with the liquor. Lowley, who, it seems, had taken least of any, called for water immediately.

"Can't take straight *booze* any more," he protested; so Scanton quickly picked up from the table, the bottle he had brought with him from the Isthmus, tapped upon it approvingly; and, holding it over Lowley's glass said:

"Here you are, old chap, the best water you ever drunk in your life! Talk about your Croton? Why, Jim, it isn't a patch to this," he said, his hand clutching the neck of the bottle. Now sing out 'when'. But the 'When' came after the liquor in Lowley's glass had been drowned beneath an over-supply of water. Finally, all hands

clinked glasses together, and Scanton toasted his friends:

"Here's looking at you, boys, and good luck to both of you!" whereupon the three men tossed their *tragos* down and resumed their seats at the table.

Settling himself again comfortably in his chair, Willinger pulled from his pocket a great, big "whackin" cheroot, which, after many attempts, he finally succeeded in lighting, at the cost, though, of a veritable carnage of lucifers! The "weed" lit, Willinger soon began to puff away for all he was worth, and puffed and puffed and puffed until at one time it seemed as if he'd need a plaster of monster draught at the back of his neck to help him do the "drawing." It was a tough old proposition of a cheroot, that, but the man behind the smoke proved himself, at last, equal to the difficult undertaking. Willinger smoked complacently on, and listened to the interesting tales that Scanton told of the Isthmus; while Lowley sat quietly watching the columns of curling smoke that rose from Wil-

linger's cheroot up to the low-bent ceiling, till all of a sudden he sprang to his feet and broke out excitedly :

"Charlie, give me a pencil and some paper quickly—quick now, before I forget it all!"

His strange request complied with, Lowley laid the paper down on the table, ran the pencil deftly over it, till from the magic of his hand there grew upon the paper characters that were not altogether unfamiliar to Scanton, who wondered under what strange influence could the pictures have been so correctly conceived and printed; but when he remembered the *bottle*, the whole thing dawned upon him, and so he bothered his head no longer. Suddenly, his tracing done, Lowley raised his head and brought his hand down with such a thud upon the table that the glasses on it rattled, and the flask lost its equilibrium and no small portion of its liquor! Then Lowley proceeded, at once, to explain the meaning of his apparent delight, which had cost him so much embarrassment,

“See here, Charlie,” he said, pointing to the figures on the paper, “this is what I’ve just seen in the wraiths of smoke from out that so-called cigar of yours—look at it, will you? Thousands of men at work digging the Canal; the great Culebra Cut teeming with life again; excavators and engines snorting and puffing and whistling in apparent delight over their resuscitation; the busy streets of Colon; the stores there crowded with customers.” Then Lowley, who, it was evident, had been vanquished completely, ceased his graphic description, drew in a long breath, and extended his hand across the table, saying:

“Put it there, Charlie! Hit or miss, I’m with you this time: I’ve made up my mind to go and cast my lot with you; so let’s call on the Skipper early in the morning and see if it cannot be arranged for us to work our way to the Isthmus.”

By this, Scanton could stand the suspense no longer: he had been amused listening all the while to the little laughable proceedings which had gone on between his



two visitors, and now he felt it was his turn to speak. So, with a smile of triumph that lighted up his whole countenance, he rose from his seat, and said with much deliberation:

“Lowley, I knew that *bottle*, or what was in it, would have fixed you all right—have never known the stuff to fail yet—it’s simply wonderful! I didn’t want you boys to go at the beginning; but I’ve thought the matter over, and have come to the conclusion that it will do you no harm to get a little knowledge of that new and interesting Republic, where you’ll have to drink more than enough of the water that has just worked such a strange and wonderful charm on Lowley!”

When Scanton had finished speaking, he saw a very puzzled look overclouding the faces of his two friends; but all that he would say as further explanation of the matter was:

“Boys, the water which you have just drunk, boasts of a legend as old as the very hills themselves. When you get to the Isth-

mus, talk to the men who have lived there for years and yéars, and they will tell you why they have gone and returned, and why it was that they just couldn't stay away."

But Willinger and Lowley were none the wiser after Scanton had got through speaking; and so, with the same puzzled look upon their faces, they left the room, and went their way home—both of them filled with the mystery of the water in the bottle.

## IV.

The Monday morning that Willinger and Lowley had fixed to call upon the Skipper of the "——" to ask him to take them to Colon, dawned, at last, for these two men. It was, in sooth, a day mixed with hopes and fears for both of them; nevertheless they were up betimes, and out on the noisy streets, cheerfully going about, as they thought unto themselves, the very last mission of their lives! Finally they reached the pier at which the steamer was lying; and Willinger who, as it had been previously arranged, was to do the talking, left his friend on the dock and boarded the ship in search of the Captain, whom he soon found and told what he wanted—

"My good fellow," replied the Commander after Willinger had unburdened himself to him, "this is not the time for you to go to the Isthmus! Why, hang it, there

isn't a blessed thing doing there yet; and it seems to me you'd have sense enough to remain where you are rather than go to the Isthmus at this unsettled stage of the game; but, of course, it's just like the rest of you people up here: you imagine because a Commission and a few civil engineers have gone to Colon that work on the Canal is in full blast already; but you never made such a mistake in all your life, I can tell you! The fact is, in my opinion, it will be some months yet before anything in the shape of Canal work proper will be attempted; therefore, be advised by me and stay where you are for the present." To all of which the undaunted and persistent pléader, by way of answer, opened up another and more powerful onslaught of supplications, before the earnestness of which the Captain felt himself compelled to capitulate; for he finally consented to include the two men on the ship's papers that voyage.

The interview over, Willinger left the steamer, whistling, "For he's a jolly good fellow," by way, no doubt, of eulogizing the



captain and giving expression to the satisfaction he more or less felt over the result of his much dreamt-of mission; for when he stepped from the gang-plank on to the dock, his face was lighted with smiles as he said to Lowley:

“It’s all fixed, Jim, we’re to be on board to-morrow morning at 9 o’clock sharp; the boat sails at 1 p. m., and we’re to go before the mast——”

“Go before the mast!” exclaimed Lowley in a voice of unmistakable terror, as he stepped back a pace or two and began to turn his hands over, over and over again, by way, it seemed, of protesting against their performing such menial service as the one that had been assigned to them.

“Why, yes, Jim, and what about it?—better men than you and I, I can assure you,” said Willinger philosophically, “have done the selfsame thing at one time in their lives, and considered it no disgrace at all—tut!—tut!—tut, man! What, in the name of heaven, did you expect anyhow? You, certainly, didn’t think, for a moment, that you

were going to occupy the Skipper's state-room, and his seat at the saloon-table—did you? If you did, say, 'forget it' at once! May going before the mast, my boy, be all the harm that might attend us in this undertaking of ours; so, come on now, and quit fooling with your hands, which, let us admit, are beautiful and tender, if by so doing, it will give you pleasure. And yet, perhaps, it would be better if you looked instead upon the cheerful side of things, and believe, despite of present conditions, that all will be well at the end"; after which little exhortation, off they both went to tell Scanton that they were sailing the next day for the Isthmus—the new El Dorado.

## V.

It was in the month of April, 1904; the sun was shining brilliantly, silvering everything around New York City and the suburbs. The trees along the streets and avenues had just begun to rehabilitate themselves with infant leaves and summer bloom on every bough. On the sidewalks, the tiny sparrows skipped and hopped, and twittered a merry song as Willinger and Lowly leisurely went their way towards the steamer.

Stopping upon the road once to take in, so to speak, a last look of their late surroundings, Willinger remarked in a voice that smacked of forced cheerfulness:

“That’s right, Jim; take in all the sights while you have the chance of doing so; for we don’t know when we’ll ever be this side of the world again! Then again, where we’re going to, we won’t come across anything like that sky-scraper before you now; neither will we find L’s there at all—only

apologies for coaches, drawn by horses, like the one of Mark Twain's creation—hat-racks! But that is neither here nor there to either of us; so let's be moving"; with which command, they both resumed their journey and did not stop again until they reached the pier, where they found Scanton waiting for them.

"Well, boys," he said, "I've come to wish good-bye and God-speed to both of you. Keep a stiff upper lip, Jim; and, say, don't you put up such an ugly face as that, when you are just about to cross the waters—it's bad luck, and enough to stir the wrath of all the storms pent up in the four quarters of heaven! So, brace up now, and get aboard cheerfully," advised Scanton, who remained on the steamer with his two friends until the last gong was sounded, and a coarse sailor-voice yelled out shrilly:

"All ashore that ain't a-going to Colon!" Then everything on deck was bustle and confusion; everybody ran to and fro excitedly, jostling against each other in their mad, sad endeavor to get their share of farewell kisses



and hand-shakes, which came to an abrupt halt when the ship sounded a shrill blast of her whistle, that stirred some hearts with emotion! Then followed the handkerchief season, and not a few tears were shed. Finally the last gang-plank was lowered, and the Captain on the bridge, sang out at the top of his voice:

“Le’ go your stern line!” To which command the answer came back promptly:

“All clear aft, sir!” following which, another deep blast of the ship’s whistle was heard, as the steamer moved slowly and majestically out to sea, midst the waving of hats and handkerchiefs from all, Scanton doing his share of it to his two outgoing friends, who had just begun the first chapter of their Isthmus adventure.

VI.

On the first night out at sea, strange dreams were those that haunted poor Lowley, who, pessimistic as he always had been over this Panama trip, in which he thought he had been practically coerced, got somehow or other, to look upon his dreams in the light of an evil prophecy; so much so that, growing nervous about them, he proceeded, the very next morning early, to relate the whole thing to Willinger, who, however, by way of emphasizing his scepticism in all such matters, drove him away, saying:

“For heaven’s sake, Jim, go along with your foolish nightmares, and give me a rest, will you! Don’t believe in dreams, anyhow!—never have, and never will, ‘world without end, amen’—guess you must have eaten something last night that didn’t quite agree with that delicate digestion of yours; and that’s all there is to it; so go now, and get

started in your work before the Mate comes around and finds you loafing!"

After this unsympathetic rejoinder, Lowley went his way and dreamt no more on the uneventful balance of the voyage, the seventh day of which saw himself and his friend safely landed in Colon.

As soon as they reached the dock, on which they were the very first ones to alight, they began to gaze wistfully around, when Lowley saw, in the distance, a short, stout, bow-legged gentleman, who was busy at the time, superintending the landing of the passengers' baggage which was to be sent across the Road on a special train leaving almost immediately; and it was to this gentleman he walked up and addressed himself:

"Pardon me, sir," he said with an air of respect that showed good breeding; "we've just got in on the boat from New York, and, being strangers, would feel obliged for any information you could give us about this place, of which we have been hearing so much lately. While in the States we were told that things were booming down

here, and so we decided to come on the chance of getting a job either with the Rail Road or the Canal Commission. What do you think are the prospects, sir? We need work quickly, for our funds are rather limited."

At the moment, Louie was taken aback for an answer, because he knew, full well, that things were by no means what they had been represented abroad to the unfortunate strangers, for whom he felt keenly; but he finally gathered himself up, and said, in reply to the question that had been put to him:

"Gentlemen, I'm sorry to tell you that you have heard all wrong. Outside of some little sanitary work that is going on, and great plans of organization, there is really nothing doing that's worth talking about; anyhow, it will do no harm for both of you to look around and see the exact condition for yourselves. I do not wish to discourage you, but I am afraid you have come too soon."

To the two strangers, all this was, natur-



ally, a very great disappointment; for they had travelled nineteen hundred and seventy miles, under unpleasant circumstances at that, but to be told that "There was nothing doing yet."

Observing the look of distress upon their faces, Louie said to them, encouragingly:

"Never mind, gentlemen, don't give up the ship yet,—never say die, even up to the last moment; if it does happen that you do get stuck finally, why then, come and see me, and I'll do the best I can to help you out of a box"; with which assurance, the two fellows picked up their grips and, with them, as much courage as they could possibly muster, and left the dock to seek lodgings in the town.

Limited means, of course, compelled them to select the cheapest, which was a Chinese restaurant, situated in *Bottle Alley*, at the rear of the Passenger-station of the Panama Rail Road Company. The room assigned to them measured no more than ten feet ten, and, as for the *furniture*, well, this consisted of two canvas folding-cots, two straw-pil-

lows, that had no covers on them (no sheets at all), two chairs that might have reigned from the time Columbus discovered America, one crippled table, that stood upon three legs—the wall doing crutch-service for the missing one—and a candle stuck into an empty bay-rum bottle that stood upon the table.

The walls and ceiling of the apartment were black with the smoke and smut of years' opium; and as for the floors—well, you could have planted in the soil that covered them, and at the end have reaped a pretty fair harvest!

And so, in a frame of mind that can better be imagined than described, Lowley gazed around the room looking completely dumbfounded! After a short while, however, both men laid their grips upon the chairs, exchanged quick glances with each other, and for a moment there was deep silence, which Willinger was the first to break.

“Gracious goodness, Lowley! why do you put on such a long face as that, will you tell

me? As for the room, don't worry about it: I shall see that it is scrubbed out nicely the very first thing in the morning; so come on, now, and let's take a short stroll along the streets in order to get acquainted with the town. I think that will do us more good than sitting here, moping over things, which cannot be remedied immediately."

It was not long after this little speech of Willinger, that the two men were out on the streets, going along *Calle Frente*, the principal thoroughfare of the town, and thence to *Cristobal*, the late French Settlement, which is now the head-quarters of the Isthmian Canal Commission and its employes. On their way, they stopped to talk with merchants, who complained to them of the sad state of business at the moment; but who felt certain that, as soon as the Americans had gained a good foot-hold in the place, things would grow immeasurably better. The only thing that Willinger and Lowley found booming at the time, was land, every desirable lot of which had been taken up by local and foreign speculators at

enormous prices; and they, therefore, saw, at a glance, that the present outlook was gloomy, and that there was no immediate hope for them, in the way of obtaining a position. And so, on their way back to the restaurant, Lowley, who was deeply concerned over the gravity of the situation, which he had turned over carefully in his mind, took the opportunity of saying:

“Well, Charlie, I guess we had better go back to God’s Country by the same steamer that brought us here; for, really, I do not see the use of waiting any longer: the place is as dead as a door-nail—darn my soul if it isn’t! I could just kick myself for coming so soon. My first intention was to wait till things had got better; and I regret now that I did not carry it out to the letter.”

“Oh, give us a rest, Jim!” interrupted Willinger; “why, hang it, we’ve only just got in on the boat and you begin to talk about returning already! I’d like to know what kind of a man *you* are, anyhow! Can’t you have a little patience and make up your mind to face the music as cheerfully as



Mark Tapley did when he went to Eden? Why, Jim, you don't know what might turn up for us yet; as for me, despite of your pessimism, I'm hoping it will be trumps! Anyhow, we have no time to lose over sentiment: we'll have to be up and doing; to-morrow morning we must see if we can get anything to do, either with the Road or with the Commission." But nothing that Willinger said succeeded in striking one ray of hope in Lowley's disappointed mind and body.

The day waned to evening; supper-time had come, and both men sat down to their first meal in Colon, with little or no inclination to eat at all. Around the table, which had no cloth upon it—nothing but the bare, grim, naked boards that revealed again the extreme misery of the place—were seated, on wooden benches, a motley crew composed of Coolies, Italians, Chinese, and Jamaica-negroes, almost every one of them besotted in liquor, a so-called rum or *seco*, concocted in this Chinese den.

Loud talk and the foulest kind of language filled the room uproariously—to say,

nothing of the unpleasant combination of odors that arose from this mixed and degraded gathering!

In the midst of the terrible uproar, Lowley, by way of "drowning his thoughts and killing time," began to beat a lively tattoo upon his glass with a knife that had as many notches in it as an old cross-cut saw had; finally, he laid the knife aside, removed the glass a little bit from him, and remarked to Willinger in a voice that savored of extreme disgust:

"This, Charlie, is the toughest, darn place I've ever struck in my life! And just think of it, too: sitting at table with a mob like this!—some of them niggers at that!—I'll swear it's more than I can put up with, and we'll have to get out of this as soon as we can."

It was just at the end of this speech that Ling Foo, the proprietor of the restaurant, clothed in a cotton singlet, his only upper garment, which was black with kitchen-smut, stepped in with Willinger and Lowley's supper; and, tossing both plates

quickly down upon the table, strutted out again with an air of importance that might have been worthy of a Chinese emperor! Business was booming that evening; and so Ling Foo, who was cook and waiter at once, had no time to lose over his customers, of whom there were lots outside waiting to fall into the first vacant seats that offered.

The bill of fare, which was served up in apologetical crockery, consisted of rice, *bacalao*—and the meanest kind of codfish it was too—*tasajo*, a kind of dried native meat, baked in the sun and sold by the yard; yam, yucca and plantain, with a finale of the now ubiquitous banana.

With the exception of the last mentioned course, the two men left their meals untasted, and went out to the streets in the direction towards the beach, to forget their troubles, if that were possible.

The night was calm and beautiful; not a ripple stirred upon the waters; in the heaven, that was without a cloud, the white moon rolled and a million stars lit up their torches; the low-lying west was still

streaked with moribund shadows of the dead day's sun; and, like a diamond set in the night, a large lone star gleamed out, sentinel-wise, over the Toro Lighthouse!

Leaving the beach, the two men walked down Front Street, where they came to a well known saloon, before which they stopped, and finally went in to get a *fresco*, for the long walk had made them somewhat thirsty.

The only table available at the time, was one at which a short, stout gentleman sat with a glass of beer before him, and puffing away at a *concha*. His coat and vest were off, and he wore a pair of "patent double million magnifyin' microscopes of hextra power," which quickly focused the strangers, who, at the invitation of the stout gentleman, seated themselves at the same table. Immediately after they got settled in their chairs, Willinger sang out to the *muchacho* behind the bar: "Two lemonades, please!"

That these two unfortunate men should have found their way to this particular saloon, was, indeed, a happy inspiration; for



Nitram Ginhigs, the proprietor of the establishment, was a man worth knowing. He had been on the Isthmus ever since 18—, without once, it is said, having taken a vacation. Ginhigs knew everybody; everybody knew Ginhigs—in fact, everybody had to know him; for he was a man to be counted upon in every emergency! With a heart that was always larger than his pocket, he had sent away, at his own expense, from time to time, many a poor stranded fellow rather than see him perish on the spot; and this, perhaps, is the reason why good old Nitram staid on forever! With an education beyond the mediocrity, his conversation was always interesting. In the history of Europe he simply excelled; and as for when you drew him out on the Irish question, well, then, you had him at his best; for he was a most powerful Irishman!

He loved the higher arts, and was fond of poetry, particularly Moore's, many of whose poems he could rattle off, from memory, as fluently as if he had just got through learning them for some special occasion; in

fact, so intense was his admiration for Moore, that many of the songs of this famous Irish singer are to be found gracing the walls of his saloon to-day.

But to return to our two unfortunate travellers. It was over their lemonades that they scraped the acquaintance of Nitram, whom they told of the mistake they had made in coming to Colon so soon; with which Ginhigs coincided, of course, while on the other hand he counselled patience. Then the conversation turned, at last, to other things of the Isthmus: the proprietor told them some thrilling stories of the '85 period; of the troublous times of '98 to '02; and, coming to things of a yet later date, he waxed warm and dwelt most graphically on the events of the ever-memorable 3rd and 4th of November, 1903, which, happily, resulted in the birth of a new Republic, and thus made possible the conditions for the union of the two great oceans by the favored Panama route. Then their talk drifted upon the tide of Canal matters, over which

Ginhigs was becoming quite loquacious; but Willinger, sipping away at the "tail end" of his lemonade, succeeded in edging in the following question :

"But, tell me, Mr. Ginhigs, when do you think that work in real, true earnest, will begin on the Canal? I mean actual digging and excavating, and buckling down to business in every sense of the word!"

"My dear good fellow," came the answer promptly, "you ask me a question that is not very easily answered; and I should state further, that, judging from the tone of voice in which you put it, you underestimate altogether, the magnitude and importance of the work that is to be accomplished! Why, man alive! can't you understand that it is not only the building of a Canal at issue? There are so many other things to be done before the Earth can be disturbed from its long years' slumbering. First of all, there is organization, which must take time in a concern that involves the greatest engineering feat that the mind of man has ever con-

ceived yet. Then, there is sanitation, which has been so sadly neglected by the late Parent-Government; again, there is the building of suitable quarters in Colon, along the line of Road, and in Panama for the housing of employes, of whom there will be thousands coming—to say nothing of the construction and equipment of up-to-date hospitals for the accommodation of the sick; and, to go further, the installation of a good water-service, so greatly needed on this long-suffering and patient-waiting Isthmus of Panama! When all these things shall have been finished, you can then expect to see the dirt fly, but not before! At this stage of the game, gentlemen, we cannot expect more than preparatory work, which is always the most difficult part of any undertaking. What shall we say then when it comes to such a mammoth one as this?—when it comes to demolishing mountains, deviating the courses of rivers; shifting railroad track-beds; and, what is the greatest problem of all others, disposing of the dirt

excavated on the line! My dear, good fellows, if I know anything about this matter at all, I really do not see how work on the Canal proper, *can* begin before two years are over our heads; so that, if my judgment be correct, it is evident you have come too soon."

It was just 11 o'clock when Ginhigs brought his somewhat lengthened, though sensible, argument to a close; and, the hour being late, the two strangers rose from their seats, bade good-night to the genial publican, and took their way to their room, there to give their troubles up to two hard pillows, on the like of which they had never laid their heads before.

The night was long and weary; plenty of mosquitoes, and consequently, very little sleep for Willinger and Lowley, who were therefore, glad when they heard the *cacho* blowing, and when they saw the first gray glimmer of the dawn, with which they were up arraying themselves in their "Sunday Penitentials." By 8 o'clock both of them



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were out, going the rounds in search of employment; but everywhere they went to, they received the self-same crushing answer:

“No vacancy at present.”

## VII.

It was the *Invierno* Season, in the month of May 1904; the rains had just begun to fall copiously, and the dear little martins were returning from their summer nooks, across the Bay, somewhere, to take up their old abodes among the stately cocoanut-trees that rim the beautiful sea-front of Colon.

Two long, weary weeks had passed since Willinger and Lowley had landed from the steamer; but, despite of all their efforts, going from place to place each day in search of something to do, they were still without employment. And so, as time went on, the situation grew from bad to worse; for, what was more serious than all, the little money they had brought with them from the States had gone all but a few *pesos*! It, therefore, occurred to them, at once, that they had reached a point where it was a case of "desperate diseases requiring desperate remedies;" and so, sitting down one morning in

his room talking the situation over with Lowley, Willinger said :

“I tell you what it is, Jim, we'll have to begin to get a move on us now ; for this state of things cannot continue much longer. We're now almost at our tether's end for money, and what I'm worrying most about, is how we're going to pay that hard nut of a Chinaman downstairs the ten dollars balance we owe him on our board and lodging. It seems to me, therefore, that the time has come for us to do something, no matter what it may be, so long as we can earn enough therefrom to keep us from starvation ! What do you say to calling on the Stevedore at the American Wharf, and finding out whether he can do anything for us or not ? You will remember what he said to us on the morning of our arrival here : his words were, ‘Come and see me in case you get stuck’ ; and if we ain't stuck now, Jim, why I would just like to know what we are then. ‘Stuck,’ I should say we are ; but I suppose there is some way out of the difficulty, and so, let us proceed to find it, because there is no time to lose.”

Here, Lowley became quite pensive; he had been listening in bent attitude; his hands closed together and stuck between his knees, his eyes fixed steadily on one particular spot on the floor; but he finally raised his head, and, in a voice that was full of resignation to the inevitable, said:

“Well, Charlie, all right; if it has to be old chap; I’m ready to go with you now”; with which both men arose synchronously, picked up their *sombreros*, and left the room in a hurry.

They soon found Neslo, who was busy at the time, attending to the stowage of a large lot of wine, put up in barrels, which had come in from Panama on “No. 8” the evening before. As the two men approached him, Neslo saw at a glance that the fellows were in trouble, which impression was quickly confirmed by Willinger, who stepped forward, saying:

“Good morning; Mr. Neslo; we’ve come to ask if you can do anything for us. We’re willing to shove a truck even, if you’ll only give us a show, sir; and green as we are in

that sort of business, we'll do our best to give you satisfaction."

As a matter of fact, Jamaicans and Fortune Islanders were the kind of labor chiefly employed by Neslo; but it is on record, that it was never known yet for the Stevedore to send away a white man in need of work when employment could be found on the dock for him.

So, when the two stranded travellers applied to him for a job, Neslo pulled a narrow slip of paper out of his pocket, stuck the pointed end of a pencil between his ample lips, pulled it out again, and began figuring upon the quantity of freight he could expect for the steamer which was sailing within a day or so. His calculations finished, he said, in his usual familiar manner:

"All right, boys, you can start to work the next 'third,' which is 1 o'clock. See those two trucks lying in the corner over yonder? Pick 'em up when you come, and go at it cheerfully; it's the best I can do for you now; but never mind that: you don't



know how soon something better might turn up for both of you."

Promptly on time, and according to arrangement, the two men returned to the pier, backed their coats, and started to work in real good earnest; but the keen-eyed Steve-dore saw immediately that the poor fellows were not accustomed to shoving a truck; for he noticed that they oftentimes jostled against the other laborers, to the extent, occasionally, of upsetting the loads they carried. This, naturally, tickled all the negroes to death; for they thought to themselves, "Well, de boss not gwine put up wid dat sort of t'ing very long"; over which idea they chuckled, of course, because it is a well known fact, that the negroes never wanted to see any other but people of their own color working on the dock among them. The presence of a white man laboring with them was always certain to evoke the negroes' resentment, which took the degraded form of loading the white man's trucks with burdens that were almost impossible to carry! But it did not take long for Willinger and

Lowley to discover that there was a plot on foot against them; for the very first morning on which they went to work, they overheard the following in a vernacular that was strange to both of them:

“Hi, Brown! Look dem ’merican white men de shove truck, eh? My son, dem don’ kno’ one damn t’ing about it at all! Fo’ every time dem go, dem sure fe upset what dem de carry. Dem jus’ done bus’ up a whole barrel o’ pilot biscuits, de cupid t’ings dem! But me well an’ glad tho’, for dem have no right ’pon de dock at all. But ’top, no, I gwine fe fix dem fo’ true; de nex’ time dem come with dem trucks, I is gwine fe give dem such a load dem never wi’ able fe carry, and den me wi’ see how dem like de job dem have here.”

The man who spoke thus was a tall Jamaica negro, who wore a slouch-hat, that shaded a pair of large fierce eyes, which might have fitted the very devil himself! and this of course, was the fellow who had been delegated by his *paisanos* to perpetrate the act of jealousy, in which, however, the

negro had been foiled, because the threat was promptly reported to Neslo, who, in language not by any means poetic, told the fellow he would dismiss him if he attempted to annoy "those two white men."

After this, everything went on smoothly, and Willinger and Lowley found constant employment on the dock; but hard work and exposure in a tropical climate had, at last, begun to tell on both of them: their figures were bent, and the crimson flush of the boreal winters that was on their cheeks when they landed, had vanished completely! In fact, they were not the same men at all; yet they worked on cheerfully, hoping that something better would turn up for them soon. But there came a day when only Lowley reported for duty; Willinger had taken sick the night before, and he was unable to leave his bed the next morning.

"Guess the work went hard with him," said Lowley to the Stevedore, in answer to his inquiry; "and then, you see, sir," he continued, "the poor fellow was never accus-

tomed to anything like this—really, I don't know how he stood it for as long as he did! I thought he would have caved in long before this. Last night he had a terrible chill, that shook the very cot upon which he lay; and such a burning fever set in that I became alarmed and called in a doctor, who was a bald-headed man, with a red face, and a pronounced Jewish nose—I can't remember his name now for the life of me; but that cuts no figure at all; suffice it to say, he seemed a pretty good sort of fellow, and took an interest in the case at once. He gave my friend some medicines, and made no charge for them whatever; neither for his visit; but that I think was because Charlie saved his dog the other day from being run over by a switch engine in the yard.”

“I'm sorry, old chap,” said Neslo, “to hear such sad news about your friend—let me know if I can do anything for him”; and with this, the last *cacho* sounded, and Lowley ran off in a hurry, picked up his truck, and worked till 9 o'clock, the breakfast hour.

Too worried to partake of the morning's meal, he went direct to his cheerless room, and as he entered upon the threshold of it, Willinger said to him, somewhat feebly:

“So glad you've come, old chap; thought you would never have shown up here again; I'm feeling mighty rocky, I can tell you: my back is almost breaking in two, and my head—Gee!—it's just on fire!—and such a thirst as I have on me—nothing seems to quench it in the least way—tried to swallow some tea the Chinaman gave me a while ago, but couldn't: it was the vilest stuff I had ever put to my lips yet”; and as Willinger uttered the last word, he felt so exhausted that he threw his head back upon his hard straw pillow, and tossed and tossed about the cot, unable to find, in any change of posture, a moment's peace or ease—nothing but weariness and the ceaseless shiftings of his body; at all of which Lowley became so alarmed and excited, that he walked across the room, two or three times, in deep meditation; and, pausing, finally, at the doorway, the frame-



work of which he held up as if to adjust his equilibrium, said :

“Charlie, I’ll be gone just for a few minutes”; and, without another word from him, as to the nature of his mission, off he went, returning shortly with Doctor Ladnar.

“You’ll have to get the fellow out of this here den pretty quick, I tell you!” was Ladnar’s first prescription, as he took off his hat to mop his bald head, which glistened as though it had just been anointed! Then he pulled a thermometer from out his waistcoat pocket, and shook it up and down at a lively pace two or three times or more; after which performance he stuck it gently under the patient’s tongue, and as he drew the instrument out again and examined it, he turned away with an ominous shake of his head, and beckoned to Lowley, who followed him, and to whom he said in a low whisper :

“105!—your friend is pretty sick, sir, and I advise you to get him into the hospital as quickly as possible; so you had better go right now and see your boss, and have him arrange the matter for you”; over which in-

structions not a moment was lost; for within an hour or so after the doctor had ordered the removal, the patient, thanks to Neslo, was comfortably settled in the Rail Road Hospital on the beach.

VIII.

The hospital, which was built over the sea, commanded a pleasant view of the harbor. It was a two-story wooden structure, with a veranda all around it, and the back of the building looked towards the Orient. In this direction it was that Willinger occupied a room, and his great delight, each morning, was to watch the sun rise over, and silver, the Santa Rita Hills in the distance. Haply, with each successive dawn, there came to him the hope that the next day would find him on his legs again; and yet little thought he that time was when he might not have seen more than one sunrise from the same hospital! But this was in the days of Doctor Quackmire, a man who believed in making quick work of his patients, and who always left it to a tall, handsome lady, dressed in ever-ready epicedial garments, to atone for his crime with the meaningless tears that

she was wont to shed at the graves of his unfortunate victims,—in short, Quackmire was a veritable Mount Pelee!

This condition of things, however, did not prevail for long: the Powers that Be soon discovered that Quackmire was incompetent, and so, dismissed him summarily; as a result of which, this would-be doctor packed up his traps and returned to his northern home, taking with him the small fortune he had made, in a comparatively short time, from the harvest of his fatal prescriptions—the tall, handsome, lady, of the free and easy falling *lagrimas*, accompanying him, of course.

Happily, however, Doctor Ladnar was called in to take Quackmire's place; and the appointment turned out to be a good one, because, even if he did, like Lulu Glaser, love dogs, Ladnar proved, in every instance, that he knew his business thoroughly; for he was most successful in all his cases. If he didn't succeed in knocking the *Chagres* fever out of your system by the aid alone of those nice medicines, calomel for one, which he often-

times prescribed, he would eventually do so by adding a few of those broad, happy smiles of his, which generally lighted up a sick-room as he entered it; but that was not to be wondered at at all, because, putting aside the fact that he was naturally of a genial and jovial disposition, he was the doctor of the Sunshine Society of Colon.



## IX.

It was Sunday morning, and the peace of the Sabbath Day lay like a benediction over the city. From the tower of the picturesque Christ-Church on the Beach, the bells tolled out the early *matin*, and Willinger started as he heard the first chimes. Haply, the sound of them had stirred within him the memory of a bygone time, when he, as a boy, had been wont to kneel in his church at home, side by side with his mother, the two of them chanting together the Lord's Prayer! Perchance her dear, sweet, face rose up from the dead past before him, for he wept like a child.

Wiping away the tears from his eyes, he stretched his hand over to a chair that stood at his bedside, picked up a small bell which lay upon it, and rang for Nosilmot, the nurse, who answered the summons immediately.

“Yes, sir; what can I do for you?” the Nurse asked gently as he approached Willinger.

“I want you,” replied the sick man feebly, “to call that gentleman you’ve noticed coming here so often to visit me. His name is Lowley, and you’ll find him on the American dock. Tell him to come here at once: I want him urgently”; which command was promptly obeyed, for Lowley was soon with his sick friend, enquiring tenderly:

“Hello, old chap, how are you feeling now, and what can I do for you?” in answer to which, the patient stared blankly for a moment, but finally replied—pausing before each word to catch his breath, which came and went with difficulty—

“Jim, my good fellow, I’m sinking rapidly; you and I have been friends for long years now, and, so, before I die, I wish to tell you something I had never told you yet.”

Then the sick man rested for a brief space, in the hush of which Lowley picked up Willinger’s hand, and pressed into its icy palm the eloquence of his enduring friendship!

Finally, in the silence, that was broken only by the rhythmic splash of the breakers from far, far, seas upon the near, near shore. Willinger withdrew his hand from Lowley's and pulled from under his cotton singlet a golden locket, attached to which was a bit of blue silken ribbon, which he gave to Lowley, saying :

“Take this, Jim; it's all I have to give you; but promise me this: you will not open it until I'm dead. *She* gave it to me, Jim—the girl I loved as no man ever loved a woman yet; but she jilted me because the tide of luck had turned against me, and all that I had possessed was lost! I came here for her sake only, thinking to make lots of money to enable me to win her back again; but it's all over now, old chap, it's all over; for soon I shall be far—far—oh, ever so far away! Tell her, when you see her, as you will some day, I know, that I have forgiven her—that I thought of her and loved her to the last—yes, to the very, very last! Great God, though, is it possible that I shall never see her dear, sweet face again?” he said,

with much emotion, as, in his anguish, he raised the locket to his parched lips and kissed it o'er and o'er again till, overcome with exertion, he fell into a deep swoon, which lasted for some little time. When he awoke he saw that Lowley was still by his bedside, and he said to him, with a nervous tremor in his voice:

"Here yet, Jim?—so good of you to have stayed so long with me; but it's just like you, Jim—you dear, dear, fellow!"

And the patient was not wrong; for Lowley had remained in the hospital the whole of that Sunday helping to nurse his sick friend; now smoothing his pillow; now adjusting his wasted body in a comfortable position; now throwing back the scattered threads of hair that lay across his marble forehead, until it came to evening, when, seeing that Willinger rested calmly, and that death was not yet imminent, he left the hospital and went to his room to rest.

The next morning early, however, he returned to the hospital and found Willinger in a delirious condition and nearing the end.

“Charlie!—Oh, Charlie!—don’t you know me?” asked Lowley, who bent down over Willinger, listening to catch the answer for which he so eagerly awaited; but never a word came back to him from the lips of the dying man—nothing but a fixed, glassy stare, that had in it the soul-deep eloquence of a last and pathetic farewell! Soon, however, Willinger swayed restlessly on his pillows; lifted his hand slowly and moved it to and fro in the air, as if to catch at something that was hovering around him; then his lips trembled, and he articulated in his last wanderings, and with his latest breath:

“Jim, — where — are — you? — haven’t seen — you — for — such — a — long — long — time! Jim — look — over — there there — yonder — can’t — you — see — her? — it — is — she — Jim — the — same —sweet—face—beckoning—to—me — and —telling — me — good-by—God—bless—her! But — Jim—where—are—you? I cannot — see — your — face — Jim — the lights — are — out — and — the — night — has — grown—so—dark—and—cold —



good—by—Jim—Good—G-o-o—” he said; but the last word was lost in an echo, for just then the dying man gasped two or three times, and stiffened out his wasted limbs—his eyes closing gradually; finally, a hollow, gurgling sound rattled in his throat, and, with one last struggle, that shook his very frame, Charlie Willinger, despite of Ladar’s skill and Nosilmot’s careful nursing, fell into that dreamless sleep, from which there is no awaking.

## X.

The next day Willinger was laid to rest in the quiet little cemetery at *Mount Hope*, situated some two miles distant from Colon. The funeral *cortege* was a scant and simple one, composed only of Louie Neslo, Nitram Ginhigs, Nosilmot, the hospital nurse, the *Padre* and Lowley, and four negroes, who had been engaged to carry the coffin up the hill, whereon the countless dead of Colon sleep their last, long sleep beneath the shade of the kingly palms and the *guava*-trees, that drop their golden blossoms upon the graves of the rich and poor alike!

The burial over, the funeral train returned to the city, soon after which Lowley was in his cheerless room alone. Taking his hat and his coat off as he entered, he walked out on the balcony to scrape from off his shoes the dull, red earth they had gathered on the hill, when, lo! he beheld the setting

sun! The west was all aglow with a great, red ball of liquid fire, wound about with clouds of silver gossamer and bars of gold, that touched the waters and all around with a beatific splendor! Then Lowley's troubled soul, no doubt, went out to the peace that lay athwart the Occident, for, as he stood up watching the dead day's sun sink gradually, down beneath the crimsoned Atlantic, that stretched out in the distance before him, there rose from out the depths of his heart a sigh so heavy that it echoed on the still night air. As the last ray of the expiring sun went down, Lowley repaired to his room, drew a chair close up to the table, on which a dull candle-light flickered, and sat down to write.

"My Dear Scanton: I have some very sad news to give you—poor Willinger is dead! He passed away yesterday, and I'm just from the funeral. I'm sorry we ever came here so soon; it has been a great blunder, for which, however, we are the only ones to blame—poor dead Charlie and myself! I sometimes try to school myself to the belief that we did it for the best; but when I remember that we came to the Isthmus immediately after the ratification of the Treaty with Panama, when nothing was doing, I see the mistake

clearer yet before me. I shall be glad to get out of this, which I'm trying very hard to do, by the very first steamer; but, unfortunately, I have not sufficient means to cover the value of the passage; in fact, I'm on my last dollar.—”

Here he dropped the pen abruptly, and in quite an agitated manner. There was the memory, it seemed, of something overshadowing his face, which wrinkled beneath the impression of it; his head drooped, and his right hand moved slowly towards his pocket, from which he, finally, withdrew the golden charm which Willinger had given to him upon his dying-bed, and which he held close up under the dim candle-light, scrutinizing it with eyes that looked ever so far away. At last, however, he drew the locket nearer to him, opened it, and when he recognized the picture it contained, he started violently and exclaimed aloud:

“Great Goodness!—it's my sister, Mabel. Why didn't he tell me about it before he died?—I might have done so much to reconcile matters between them both; but it's too late now—too late,” he repeated, as he

stretched his arms out at full length across the table, and buried his face between them.

Weary with the late vigils at Willinger's bedside, he soon fell into a quiet slumber, from which, however, he was suddenly awakened by the touch of a hand upon his right shoulder. Raising his head, and turning around to see who was the intruder, he came face to face with Nitram Ginhigs, who had stepped in on a visit of condolence.

"See here, my good fellow," said Ginhigs in his usual sympathetic manner, "this sort of thing will never do at all—you'll have to brace up and 'face the music' like a man! Tell me, is there anything I can do for you?"

"I'm sure, Mr. Ginhigs, it's extremely kind of you, a perfect stranger," responded Lowley, in a voice that trembled with appreciation, "to interest yourself so much in me; but," he continued, "the only thing I see that you can do for me just at this present moment, is to tell me, sir, how to get out of Colon quickly. I admit that I came here too soon; and that the fault is mine; but then I have suffered and paid dearly for it



all!" To which, however, Nitram Ginhigs made no answer. Silently meditating, he adjusted his spectacles upon his ample nose, dug deep down into his pocket, by no means as large as his heart, and pulled from out of it something that glittered like gold, which he left in Lowley's hand, and quietly walked out of the room without saying a *single* word to the recipient of the secret of his charity! But there was nothing strange about this: it was Nitram Ginhigs all over; for he was a man who never waited for, nor wanted, thanks for all the good he had done, from time to time, in the town; and heaven only knows how much of gratitude, if any at all, he ever did receive for the manifold charities which he dispensed to the stranded ones, with whom he came in contact daily.

"Well, I'll see him and thank him myself to-morrow," said Lowley, as he put the money away and resumed his letter to Scan-ton:

"Glad to say I leave for God's country by the next steamer positively; will tell you all when we meet; don't fail to write to my sister, Mabel, in Nebraska

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(you know her address); inform her of my home-coming, and relate to her my condition exactly—say that I hope to be with her shortly.

With kindest regards, believe me,

Yours very truly,

**JAMES LOWLEY."**

## XI.

About a fortnight after Lowley had dispatched his letter, he found himself in New York City once again. As he walked down the gang-plank of the steamer, with a grip in his hand that, apparently, was not overburdened with clothes, Scanton greeted him with a friendly:

“Glad to see you back, old boy. How sad about poor Willinger! It seems just like the irony of fate; for I remember well, that he was the one who urged the trip and was so bent on going to the Isthmus; but tell me all about it; of yourself and of Charlie’s last moments in that far-away country.” With which the two men, arm in arm, walked away together and stood up on the dock talking for quite a while. Their conversation over, Scanton handed a sealed envelope to Lowley, who opened the same and found that it contained a letter from his sister,

Mabel, inviting him to come and make his home with her in Nebraska, where, she wrote, to say, she had become a prosperous school-teacher; and in the same letter she enclosed sufficient money to pay her brother's way over, and to purchase for him whatever clothing he might need to make himself presentable.

It was not long after Lowley's arrival in New York that he proceeded to Nebraska. Finally, when he met his sister, Mabel, who had not seen him for years, she was shocked to see the change that had come over him, and so, she wept like a child; for she noticed that Lowley's cheeks were pale and hollow, his frame bent, and that his eyes were yellow; but when she recognized about her brother's person, the locket which she had given to Willinger, in days gone by, the climax of her sorrow was reached, and the old love quickened again within her! It all seemed more than she could bear up under, at once; and so, sickened with the memory of the past before her, she threw herself upon a near sofa, and sobbed and sobbed and

sobbed as if her very heart would break beneath the burden of it all—

“Oh, Charlie! You dear, dead Charlie!” she cried aloud, “if sweet forgiveness be the power of the dead, forgive me, Charlie—forgive me, as God will forgive us all!”









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